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SOCCER

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ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE SUMMARY

By Daryl Katz with international agencies

Liverpool and Chelsea battled to a 1-1 draw in a frantic encounter that provided 90 minutes of abrasive action and changing fortunes. Chelsea dominated the early exchanges, seemingly determined to add to their tally of just one victory in 38 league visits to Anfield. The Liverpool defence once again proved suspect, troubled by some searching passes from the Chelsea midfield.

When an ecstatic Pierluigi Casiraghi gave Chelsea the lead on ten minutes with his first Premiership strike, it seemed they were well on their way to strengthening their championship claims.

Gianfranco Zola and Brian Laudrup provided the sort of cutting edge required from a side challenging for honours. Chelsea's attacking intent was obvious as both Zola and Casiraghi attempted outrageous 40-yard efforts in an effort to unsettle David James.

Duberry headed wide from Desailly's free kick while Tore Andre Flo, once again reduced to the role of substitute, was denied by James.

The elusive Laudrup weaved through the Liverpool defence to place a drive just over the bar while an instinctive link-up between Gustavo Poyet and Flo led to Di Matteo striking fiercely but marginally high.

Roy Evans again showed his dismay as a penalty claim was denied when Karlheinz Riedle went down under a challenge from Leboeuf in the penalty area. In truth though, without the injured Steve McManaman, Liverpool displayed a lack of direction in attack.

Outplayed and outthought for an hour, Liverpool displayed greater heart and urgency as the game progressed. Chelsea seemed comfortable absorbing the Liverpool pressure, but seven minutes from time Michael Duberry lunged at Robbie Fowler and Jamie Redknapp sent the resulting free kick into the bottom corner of the Chelsea goal.

Uncertainty seemed to engulf Chelsea and Liverpool streamed forward in the closing minutes in search of an unlikely winner. The

final whistle left Chelsea relieved at a point from a match they should perhaps have won.

At Highbury, Dennis Bergkamp ended his 10-game scoring drought with a two-goal flourish and could even afford to miss a late penalty in Arsenal's 3-0 demolition of Newcastle United.

Bergkamp, who hit 22 last season, scored his first in the 22nd minute and Anelka weighed in with a second on the half hour.

Newcastle could not contain Arsenal, and in particular the rampant Marc Overmars. Nikos Dabizas (left) earned a red card for hauling down the speedy Dutchman in the 65th minute and Bergkamp made it 3-0 from the penalty spot. Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger revealed his delight at the return to scoring form of a strike force that had endured almost 26 hours with just one goal between them.

Newcastle entered Highbury aiming to exact revenge for the FA Cup Final defeat. However, despite the recent sparkling form of Alan Shearer, it took a display of tenacious defiance from Shay Given to prevent an embarrassing scoreline.

While Highbury celebrated, Gullit issued a stark warning to the Newcastle board that they must brandish the chequebook if they are to challenge the likes of Arsenal and Manchester United.

For all the UK news and stories go to Global Game Section.



**Front Page Photography of
Northern Spirit's Michael Cunico
by
Melissa Browning**

Premier League

Blackburn Rovers 3	West Ham United 0
Flitcroft (10, 47)	
Davidson (68)	
Coventry City 1	Aston Villa 2
Soltvedt (71)	Taylor (29, 39)
Derby County 0	Tottenham Hotspur 1
	Campbell (60)
Leeds United 0	Leicester City 1
	Cottee (76)
Middlesbrough 4	Sheffield Wed 0
Beck (27, 45)	
Ricard (49)	
Gascoigne (90)	
Nottingham Forest 0	Charlton Athletic 1
	Youds (5)
Southampton 0	Manchester Utd 3
	Yorke (11)
	Cole (59)
	Cruyff (74)

Wimbledon 1	Everton 2
Roberts (8)	Cadamarteri (32)
	Ferguson (60)
Arsenal 3	Newcastle Utd 0
Bergkamp (21, pen 66)	
Anelka (29)	
Liverpool 1	Chelsea 1
Redknapp (84)	Casiraghi (10)



Premier League Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Aston Villa	8	4	0	0	7	1	2	2	0	3	1	20	8
Manchester United	7	3	1	0	10	3	1	1	1	3	3	14	7
Arsenal	8	3	1	0	8	1	0	3	1	1	2	13	6
Middlesbrough	8	1	3	0	7	3	2	0	2	5	5	12	4
Liverpool	8	1	3	0	6	4	2	0	2	7	6	12	3
Chelsea	7	2	2	0	5	2	1	1	1	6	6	12	3
Derby County	8	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	3	3	12	2
Wimbledon	8	2	1	1	7	5	1	2	1	5	6	12	1
West Ham United	8	2	1	1	6	5	1	2	1	1	3	12	-1
Newcastle United	8	2	1	1	7	4	1	1	2	6	6	11	5
Leeds United	8	2	1	1	4	1	0	4	0	4	4	11	3
Tottenham Hotspur	8	1	1	2	5	10	2	1	1	4	4	11	-5
Charlton Athletic	8	1	1	1	7	3	1	3	1	5	7	10	0
Everton	8	0	3	1	0	1	2	1	1	6	5	10	0
Sheffield Wednesday	8	2	0	2	4	2	1	0	3	4	7	9	-1
Leicester City	8	1	2	1	4	5	1	1	2	3	5	9	-1
Blackburn Rovers	8	2	1	1	7	4	0	1	3	1	6	8	-2
Nottingham Forest	8	1	1	2	1	3	1	0	3	4	7	7	-5
Coventry City	8	1	1	2	4	8	0	1	3	1	6	5	-9
Southampton	8	0	1	3	3	8	0	0	4	0	13	1	-18

Australian News

WORLD STARS HEAD FOR SYDNEY

The world's elite soccer players will be invited to Sydney next year to play in a ceremonial match to mark the official opening of the stadium that will host the 2000 Olympics.

Stadium Australia chief executive Chris Chapman said last week that a match between the Socceroos and a World XI would take place on June 12 in front of an expected capacity crowd of 110,000.

Chapman said soccer's governing body FIFA, had approved the match thereby ensuring that the world's best players will be available to play for the Sydney and the Australian public (this game should attract

"The decision by FIFA to allow a World XI to play at Stadium Australia is obviously fantastic news," Chapman said to the international media.

"It provides us with a fairytale opening."

The stadium, which is being built at a cost of A\$670 million will be finished in June but the organizing committee for the Sydney Games has agreed to put back the official opening until June to allow for the completion of the major leagues in Europe.

"Because of the timing, the best players in Europe will be free to play," Soccer Australia chairman Basil Scarscella noted.

"Our top European players would also be available, so we'd be looking to fill the stadium."

The stadium, which will be used for athletics and soccer and the opening and closing ceremonies at the 2000 Olympics, will also host a number of other major events in 1999.

Imagine that, Ronaldo, Zidane, Beckham and Kewell all on the one park at Homebush? At last some good news for an Australian Soccer supporter!



SOCCEROO DISASTER!

AUSTRALIA 0
NEW ZEALAND 1
Burton 25

OCEANIA NATIONS
CUP FINAL

Suncorp stadium, BRISBANE



SOCCER AUSTRALIA

Australia's ability to crumble when the pressure is on has once again cost us dearly, both in prestige and financial terms.

What was supposed to be a stroll in the park, on our home ground, turned out to be an afternoon of bruising reality, with a New Zealand team always confident of an upset against what was, in reality, an Australian B team still in pre-season mode. Thanks Oceania.

New Zealand now go to the Confederations Cup with the prospect of over a million dollars to be shared around by the players and national federation.

They must have thought all their Christmases had come at once when

an indecisive Socceroo defence gifted dangerous Kiwi Mark Burton a goal in the first half.

After that the visitors' organisation, and tenacity, was simply too much for an Australian team so devoid of ideas, so incapable of breaking down what was a tight and physical defence, that the game plan for the home side consisted of hopeful balls pumped upfield.

Was this the team that was able to penetrate sides at will during the Venables era? Quite obviously not. Match report and views, page five.

LEICHHARDT TIGERS SOCCER CLUB TRIALS

ALL TRIALS WILL BE HELD AT LAMBERT PARK, MARION ST, LEICHHARDT.

1ST GRADE & UNDER 21s TRIALS

Sunday 4th October — 1.00pm
Sunday 11th October — 1.00pm
Sunday 18th October — 1.00pm
Sunday 25th October — 1.00pm

Wednesday 7th October — 6.30pm
Wednesday 14th October — 6.30pm
Wednesday 21st October — 6.30pm
Wednesday 28th October — 6.30pm

UNDER 18s TRIALS

Sunday 4th October — 10.00am
Sunday 11th October — 10.00am
Sunday 18th October — 10.00am
Sunday 25th October — 10.00am

Friday 9th October — 6.30pm
Friday 16th October — 6.30pm
Friday 23rd October — 6.30pm
Friday 30th October — 6.30pm

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE TRIALS

ALSO

Under 13s & Under 14s
Tuesday 13th Oct 6.30pm, Tuesday 20th Oct 6.30pm
Tuesday 27th Oct 6.30pm, Tuesday 3rd Nov 6.30pm

Under 15s & Under 16s
Thursday 15th Oct 6.30pm, Thursday 22nd Oct 6.30pm
Thursday 29th Oct 6.30pm, Thursday 5th Nov 6.30pm.

Saturday 17th October U/13 — 9.00am, U/14 — 11.00am, U/15 — 1.00pm, U/16 — 3.00pm
Saturday 24th October U/13 — 9.00am, U/14 — 11.00am, U/15 — 1.00pm, U/16 — 3.00pm
Saturday 31st October U/13 — 9.00am, U/14 — 11.00am, U/15 — 1.00pm, U/16 — 3.00pm

APPOINTED 1999 COACHING STAFF

1st Gde Coach — Arno Bertogna (Former Socceroo)
U/21s Coach — Billy McCall
U/18s Coach — John Panuccio
U/16s Coach — Tony Raciti
U/15s Coach — Lenny Salvaggio
U/14s Coach — John Romeo
U/13s Coach — Robert Gabrielli

Manager — Peter Griffith-Jones
Manager — Joe Trieste
Manager — Alvaro Salomoni
Manager — Marlo Guererra
Manager — Phillip Salvaggio
Manager — Dominic Vitetta
Manager — Aldo Di Mento

Youth League Director of Coaching & Co Ordinator
Asst. Youth League Director of Coaching & Co Ordinator
Youth League Convenor
Assistant Youth League Convenor
Club Goal Keeper Coach
Head Club Physio Therapist
Physio
Youth League Physio
Club Doctor

Billy McCall
Andrew Baudille
Rudi Barecca
Aldo Di Mento
Frank Mikuletic (NSW State Keeper)
Paul Fioretto
Michael Ho Shon
Tommy Cellucci
Dr Brent Wong

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All Youth Teams will be touring Fiji for a pre-season tournament from January 3rd to January 8th 1999

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Australian News

COSMOS FANS FUMING

By Graham Cooke

Cosmos fans have reacted with outrage over the possibility the club will lose two home games this season. The move comes after a decision by the Bruce Stadium management to declare the venue out of bounds from October 26 to December 6 in order to fix a nematode problem with the turf, and to speed up work on the still-to-be-completed main grandstand.

This will mean scheduled games against Perth Glory and Melbourne Knights will not be able to be



played at Bruce.

There was bitterness at the cavalier treatment of the club by stadium authorities, and anger at the Cosmos itself for considering a switch to the grounds of the Glory and the Knights in return for a share of the gate.

One fan said if the Cosmos was going to deprive him of two home games, he would deprive the Cosmos of his attendance for the full season.

"They say they put the fans first, but in this case they're just thinking of the dollars they'll get from sharing the gates at Melbourne and Perth," he said.

Another agreed. "It's quite unacceptable that supporters should be deprived of a home match for six weeks," he said. "The games should be played at Seiffert Oval."

Canberra Cosmos wrapped up its preparation for the Ericsson Cup season with a 1-1 draw against the Canberra Rockets - a result which will hardly inspire supporters that better times lie ahead.

The Rockets, a representative team drawn from the 10 ACT Premier League clubs, had been thrown together at the last minute, Monaro's Matt Cachia being asked to join the squad only a couple of hours before the kick-off.

Despite this, and the fact a number of players had hardly touched a ball in the last month, the Rockets chased and hustled their opponent, and for at least 50 per cent of the match looked the better side.

The Rockets' star was Scott Conlon, who many believe was desperately unlucky to be passed over for the Cosmos. He laid on the game's opening

goal mid-way through the first half, when his quick free kick caught defenders napping and enabled striker Steve Lazzari to slip the ball past goalkeeper Vilson Knezevic.

Young Victorian import Anthony Magnacca equalised with a well-placed header before half time, but it was Conlon again after the interval - a powerful dipping drive from a free kick which brought the save of the game from substitute goalkeeper Grant Barlow.

Cosmos coach Rale Rasic said the Rockets had lifted themselves for this game. "They were getting struck into us all over the field. If they were capable of playing at that level day in and day out, then they would all be pressing for a place with the Cosmos," he said.

"Our problem was in midfield tonight. There was no rhythm and we were rushing things."

"With the season approaching, places still at stake, and so many in the squad never having played at this level, there is a certain tension in some players."

Rockets team boss Ian Heywood said his squad was missing seven of its normally first-choice players "including one who pulled out 90 minutes before the kick-off," he said.

"The sad thing is there may well be no further matches for this team until we play Illawarra next June."



Peter Buljan... this classy young striker is one of the big attractions for Cosmos in this new season.

NEW SPIRIT IN OUR NATION'S LEAGUE

By Mark Fowler

The professional approach taken so far by Northern Spirit was again in evidence at their media launch last Tuesday (September 29).

While the players are full-time and therefore professional, behind the scenes the club is proving to be ultra-professional.

On a hot day at North Sydney Oval, TV's Tim Bailey presented proceedings, but his enthusiasm was barely needed to add to the colour the Spirit provided.

Bailey firstly introduced the club's dynamic chairman Remo Nogarotto, who spoke of his aims for the fledgling club.

"To provide a spirit and a sense of excitement that has long been missing in Sydney we aim to redefine the perception of soccer in Australia's largest city."

Nogarotto also blasted critics who compared the club to Collingwood Warriors, who lasted just one year in the NSL.

"We have put a lot of hard work into this club and to compare us with other failed entities is quite frankly an insult."

After an unbeaten pre-season containing 10 games (not including Friday's game at Wollongong) player/coach Graham Arnold (right) is pleased with the response from his players.

"They are training hard and doing everything

in the Sky, which was apt as those present squinted into the blue sky to get a glimpse of the Soccerroo defender (pictured below).

It was hard to gauge who was the most relieved as Casserly landed safely - Casserly who had just dropped from 10000 feet, Graham Arnold that a key player was safe or most of the other players happy that they hadn't had to do it!

After a slightly undignified landing, Casserly removed his bright jumpsuit to reveal the Spirit's new eye-catching strip, while the other players removed their tracksuits to model both the home and away jerseys.

A first game against a strong Sydney Olympic outfit should prove a great night at North Sydney Oval on October 9. The club is also promising entertainment to encourage fans to get there early, and on the pitch it should be a great game.

There should be no talking up needed for this one, as with Graham Arnold, Robbie Slater, Ian



Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Luke Casserly!

possible to make a success of being professional players."

Arnold is obviously relishing the challenge, and admitted it; "feels like I've thrown the clock back 10 years."

The first team squad was present at the launch apart from captain Robbie Slater, who was suffering from chicken pox. However the Spirit gambled with the health of another player, with ex-Marconi player Luke Casserly dropping, in to the ground via a tandem sky-dive!

The music blaring from the speakers was Spirit

Crook, Mark Brennan and Adem Poric potentially on show, it will be a fascinating game of the very highest quality.

This will be a big test for Arnold's men, but the squad he has put together looks to have good balance. Those knocking the Spirit before they have kicked a ball in anger will get a shock, and while ultimately the success of the club will depend on what happens on the field, off the field these guys are proving as professional as the players.

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OCEANIA NATIONS CUP

HUMILIATION!

By Glenn Davis in Brisbane

The hoodoo of failing in the crunch games returned on Sunday as an unimaginative Socceroo selection were outmuscled by an organised New Zealand 1-0 at an empty Suncorp Stadium.

New Zealand, revelling in the underdog status, forced the Socceroos into numerous errors while the homeside also put themselves under pressure with poor passing and an inability to break down a well-organised side. The lack of Socceroo invention was a joy ... if you were a New Zealander.

The Kiwis' match winner came in the 24th minute after two mistakes by skipper Alex Tobin and midfielder Kasey Wehrman — arguably the Socceroos' best player.

Aussie-based striker Vaughan Coveny made the best of a poor diving tackle by Tobin before laying off for midfielder Mark Burton (right) who also beat a mis-timed sliding tackle from Wehrman before slotting home.

The NZ defence was awesome: Danny Hay, Gavin Wilkinson, Chris Zoricich and Sean Douglas are a class act, while Mori and Trimboli were shackled and looked shadows of their former selves. The fact the Kiwi back four are all pros in our burgeoning national league is cold comfort.

The final featured several battles in midfield with Tahiti referee Massimo Raveino making four first half bookings — three in the space of three minutes.

Burton's goal also was the first time Australia had conceded a goal to New Zealand in eight matches. He also had a great game and, along with Mori, was player of the tournament.

Mori had the chance to equalise 14 minutes after the break. He found space on the edge of the box after being set up perfectly by Wehrman but his shot was off target.

The Socceroos suffered a major blow one minute later when Australia's most capped player, Tobin, was knocked out and replaced by Dominic Longo after receiving an accidental elbow from Coveny.

Australian sweeper Simon Colosimo could have levelled the game midway through the second half and sent it into golden goal extra time, but his attempt after a barnstorming forward run



Australia's coach Raul Blanco

was brilliantly saved by the reliable Jason Batty.

In the dying minutes the Socceroos had an appeal for a penalty turned down by Raveino after substitute Kris Trajanovski appeared to be tripped by Wilkinson in the box.

The more the Socceroos tried, the more the Kiwis simply shut up shop. New Zealand had obviously done their homework, they nullified Australia's wide threat and were too organised and strong to be beaten through the middle.

This one will be talked about for a long time in New Zealand, plus, they have the glamour of the Confederations Cup to look forward too. How did it go so wrong for Australia?

EDITORIAL

Before this tournament, Oceania's Charlie Dempsey advised Australia that "Oceania is your future".

Well, if this is our future, then God help us all. It was a mickey mouse tournament (irrespective of the final result), in terms of standard, publicity and, not surprisingly, attendances.

Worst of all, our players learned nothing from the minnows and gave New Zealand, with their strongest line-up (unlike us) another famous scalp.

And why was this scheduled in our pre-season when our NSL clubs most need the players and our overseas stars are busy making money? Frank Farina was right in criticizing the timing of the Cup (and I use that word advisedly, given that it was always going to be New Zealand and us in the final).

Having said that, good luck to New Zealand. They deserved it and now have the chance to earn desperately needed funds that will surely boost the long-term plans of gaining admission to the Ericsson Cup. Short-term benefits include an estimated \$50,000 per player.

This debacle also puts a question mark over coach Blanco's future. In any other country he would be shown the door after a disaster of this magnitude. He will probably hold on to his Olyroo position, but his plans to coach a World Cup Socceroo side have been dealt a savage blow.

Say what you like about the Venables era, but our sheer mobility and positive outlook meant that we were constantly creating chances, even with our home-based Socceroos (remember Optus Cup January 97?).

On Sunday, we never looked like scoring. Sure, Trajanovski could have had a penalty, but it would have been rough justice on the organised Kiwis.

What now? We asked ourselves the same question ten months ago and, to be honest, I really don't know. We play the US in a meaningless friendly in San Jose on Nov 6. Perhaps the bulk of the Olyroos should be our national team from now till 2000?

Asia has to be our future. Let New Zealand play 'big brother' to the Oceania minnows. If it wasn't for the carrot of Confed cash, Oceania, would literally mean nothing except the occasional holiday game on a tropical island and one tough game every four years in Auckland. That's the glittering reality of Oceania.

Finally a word about a great Australian. Alex Tobin may well have played his last game for the national team. The Confed Cup would have been a wonderful stage on which to say goodbye, yet, alas it is not to be.

Sadly, just a small number of hardy fans saw him break Paul Wade's record and, possibly, play his last game. He deserved much more.

Australia's Soccer supporters, still in mourning over the MCG debacle, have another arrow through the heart. How much more can we take?

At least we have our national league kick-off this weekend. It promises to be a good one, with the standout game being Spirit v Olympic. So whichever game you go to, enjoy it. You deserve it!

NORTHERN SPIRIT v SYDNEY OLYMPIC



Graham Arnold



Robbie Slater



Clayton Zane

AT

North Sydney Oval

Featuring

Merril Bainbridge live in concert at 6.30pm, followed by Fireworks.

Come and witness the dawning of a new era in

Australian Soccer under the stars at North Sydney Oval

Friday October 9

Kick-Off 7.30pm

Gates Open 6.00pm



Peter Tsekenis



Branko Culina

Australian News



Soccer Weekly was proud to have produced a special commemorative poster for a very successful group of players. Sydney Olympic's youth sides have had a phenomenal year, being champions in four grades. Above are some of the players with their Soccer Weekly 'Champions' posters.

COSMOS HOPING FOR LUCK OF THE IRISH

By Aidan Ormond

Canberra Cosmos' Irish midfielder Norman Kelly has seen some hard times in the nation's capital in these last two seasons. While not wanting to speak prematurely he is cautiously optimistic that the rising tide of professionalism will bring about a sea change in the fortunes of the league's underachievers.

Soccer Weekly: "It's a cosmopolitan Cosmos these days, how is everyone blending in with each other?"

N.K.: It's excellent. We have a good mix of young blokes willing to learn and work hard, together with older heads with experience. It is a happy dressing room with a lot of positive things occurring, such as making our dressing room more like home, it has a lecture room and has been fitted out — we eat together after training at Deakin and really, everything is becoming more and more professional."

Soccer Weekly: Can finals football be played at Bruce Stadium this year?

N.K.: "Well, we all know how the fans are here. When we do well they really do support us, and if we did make the finals they would pack out Bruce. I really enjoy Canberra, there are good people here and the potential is there, and when we do get a good soccer team it is going to be excellent."

"The potential is huge here, and once we become successful it will really give us a boost."

Soccer Weekly: And what about you Norman?

N.K.: "I really like it here and I am working for Soccer Canberra and perhaps I am thinking of ways to coach juniors, so yes I am thinking about a future here."

Soccer Weekly: You have travelled a fair bit, why?

N.K.: When I made the move to Malaysia I wanted to see another culture, and once I had made that move I really did not want to go back. However, I was a 'pro' in the UK for about eight years and sometimes you miss that lifestyle, but hopefully Australia is moving in that direction and that teams are setting

the example.

"You're settled in one place and make friends then your career takes over, but I am still in contact with old friends. In fact I am still in touch with some of the guys from Oldham in 1986. Dad's a big fan, but it's too far to see me in Australia. They came across last year, when we won 8-1, so I guess I was lucky."

Norman Kelly: 28, Canberra Cosmos
Previous clubs: Glentoran, Oldham Athletic, IFK Stermsted, Dunfermline, Raith Rovers, Brunei,



MOORE BACK WITH VENABLES

Scotland's Rangers said that they have accepted a 800,000 pound (\$1.5 million) bid from English first division side Crystal Palace for Soccerroo defender Craig Moore.

The 25-year-old was expected to join up with his former national coach, Terry Venables, who is now manager of the London last weekend.

Moore was expected to play in Rangers' UEFA Cup tie with Beitar Jerusalem of Israel in Glasgow on Thursday and then conclude his transfer to Crystal Palace.

He has been with Rangers since coming to Britain as an 18-year-old but the club have decided to sell the player now rather than lose him for nothing under the Bosman ruling next summer.

The young Aussie first came to prominence during the 1993 World Youth Championships held in Australia, and teams up with fellow Aussie defender Steve Horvat and Olyroo midfielder Nick Rizzo.

Today (Tuesday SocOctober 6) the kids of Sydney, who are currently on school holidays, can 'Feel the Spirit' by getting down to North Sydney Oval No. 2 from 11am to 1pm.

There they can be part of an open training session with the stars of the Ericsson Cup's newest and most glamorous side, Northern Spirit.

This is an ideal way for the kids to see up close their favourite players. The club will even provide a barbecue lunch after (we can just see Arnie with the big hat on cooking up a storm behind the barbie!).

It's all part of the commitment the club has to the community of Sydney and, in particular the north shore, where most of its support lies.

So Mums and Dads, if the kids are driving you nuts over the hols, let Uncle Arnie and his boys look after them, but get there early. Last time they had a family fun day over 4,000 turned up, proof once again that the club is going to be HUGE.

Speaking of huge, the first game of the Ericsson Cup of Life is this Friday, with Spirit at home to the reinvigorated Sydney Olympic. Both sides are fully professional, both sides have overseas star players and both want to win badly. Needless to say the crowd is going to be large so instead of struggling to find a car park, Spirit will provide a free shuttle bus from North Sydney station, and for only two dollars a shuttle from the North

Sydney Leagues club.

It would be best to get there early because international singing star Merril Bainbridge will be performing (remember her huge number one record 'Mouth') and there will be fireworks also.

The club has also renamed North Sydney Oval 'Spirit Park' and will have a designated areas for families and those who want to get a bit more vocal.

Gippsland Falcons has also got into the ground name-changing adventure. Their home ground is now called Mobil Park. Ray Blaney from Mobil Australia said in a media release that he was delighted to be involved with the Falcons and that they 'have enjoyed a mutually beneficial arrangement in the past and this new agreement will now take us into the next century.'

The Falcons are really starting to move with the announcement this week that Soccer Weekly's Damian Tripodi, with friends, will be hosting the Gippsland Falcons' own radio show on local radio 104.7. They will be broadcasting games and interviewing players and generally keeping the community informed of what is happening with this go-ahead club.

They have already won the pre-season cup and have exciting Olyroo Archie Thompson, as well as former Welsh international Jeff Hopkins at the back of their defence.

They could be the surprise packets of the Ericsson Cup, so all those down there should tune into the show.

And for all those in Queensland, get down to Suncorp next Saturday night for the Strikers and Marconi. It will be a triple header with the youth playing plus the Queensland Cup Final kicking off at 4.30pm.

This titanic struggle will be between two of the biggest rivals in the state: Brisbane City and Brisbane Lions.

And with Frank Farina returning to the club he left just a few months ago, expect fireworks.

In the semis of the QLD Cup, which were played in Rockhampton, Lions won 7-0 and City won 4-2, both against regional federation sides.

And in the 'Champion of Champions' Cup, Toowoomba beat Albany Creek on penalties.

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SOCCER CLUB
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October 10, 1998

CROATIA PARK
Gipps St, Werrington
Off Werrington Rd

U13s 9am, U14s 10.30am, U15s 12pm, U16s 1.30pm
All players must attend half an hour prior to trials

For more information contact
John Jedinak 0418 865 357

Australian News

BASER OVERSEAS

By Dwyght Tuffnell

South Melbourne's Tansel Baser has still not returned from Turkey after his transfer to Trabzonspor fell through. Olyroo Baser was expected back in Melbourne last week, but his non-appearance has added another twist to his on-again-off-again transfer.

South knocked back Trabzonspor's offer for Baser and asked him to return immediately. South had reportedly asked Trabzonspor one million dollars for Baser's services.

Melbourne Knights coach Vid Horvat said the Sonny Sevin situation was close to being resolved.

Sevin signed a contract with Canberra Cosmos after becoming a free agent from Wollongong Wolves but he has said that the Cosmos did not lodge the contract.

He came back to Melbourne and played with North Coburg United in the 3rd division of the State League.

Whilst training with the Knights, he impressed Horvat enough to want him signed.

"The club and Soccer Australia are still checking it out, but he (Sevin) is clear in his mind that he can sign for us," said Horvat.

Dean Culina, who trialled with South Melbourne, is another player Horvat is having a look at.

"He's a talented player. South Melbourne have the best team in Australia and are hard to break into but we'll be giving him a chance and we'll take a good look at him."

Ante Buhic, who played against South in the Laurie Schwab memorial match, will be given a bit longer by Horvat before he decides whether to add him to the squad or not.

"He's a hard worker and a strong defender."

"But he's been out of the game for eight months and still needs a little more time."

The Knights also had a look at Shushu, a left-sided player from Cameroon who had earlier trialled with Carlton.

But he appeared for training only once and has not been seen since at the club.

The Knights have a bye this weekend but Horvat said they were planning to play a friendly on Sunday and possibly Wednesday night in preparation for their round two clash with Wollongong.

The coaching merry-go-round in the Victorian Premier League continues even in the off season.

Former Socceroo star Alan Davidson is the new coach of Port Melbourne Sharks, taking over from Andy Bozikas.

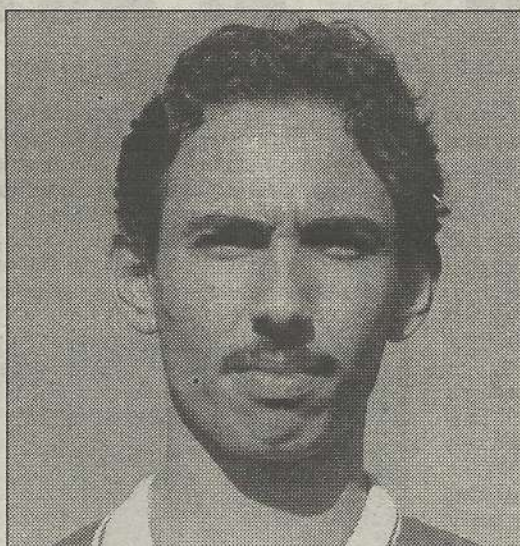
Davidson had been linked with a coaching role back in Malaysia where he played for many years with great success.

Vlado Vanis, who took St Albans Saints to the minor premiership and the Grand Final, is now in charge of Preston Lions, replacing veteran coach Andon Donevski.

Green Gully Cavaliers are without a coach since Andrew Marth, now at Carlton, will be unable to continue the job.

Former National League winner with Melbourne Knights, Ian Dobson, is favourite for the job.

Dobson's present club, Altona Magic, may replace him with this years championship coach, Gary Cole from Bulleen Inter Kings.



PARRAMATTA EAGLES SOCCER CLUB

1999 SEASON TRIALS

Everley Park

(Outside Melita Stadium)

Everley Road, South Granville

Under 13 — Monday 12, 19, 26 October
Under 14 — Tuesday 13, 20, 27 October
Under 15 — Wednesday 14, 21, 28 October
Under 16 — Thursday 15, 22, 29 October

All sessions commencing at 6.00pm

FOR ENQUIRIES RING
9645 4413
AFTER 6PM

KIWIS DO THE DOUBLE!

By Rebecca Stanton

New Zealand schoolboys proved to be too strong for Australia defeating them 3-0 in the first leg of the International two-match series, played at Marconi Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

It was quite a weekend for Trans-Tasman Soccer, with the Kiwi national team beating the Socceroos in the Oceania Nations Cup Final.

In this game, New Zealand displayed strong tactical moves, with a good combination between striker, Chris Killen and midfielder, Rodney Mays who constantly put pressure on the Australian defence.



This New Zealand combination were able to put their team on the scoreboard in the 20th minute with a great header by Chris Killen after a solid cross from Rodney Mays.

The Aussies had an opportunity to equalise in the 25th minute after striker Heath Gillett made a good recovery run up the left side of the field, but unfortunately booted the ball well over the crossbar.

Action aplenty in the 40th minute when New Zealand's goalkeeper was awarded a red card for taking out a player outside the box in a race for the ball, but the Aussies were still unable to capitalise from the free-kick.

The first half didn't prove to be too successful for the Australians as they had too many stray passes and failed to use all the field.

"We gave the ball away easily and we weren't hungry for it, they were, so they simply won the game," said Australian captain, Shaun Molenda after the game.

Two minutes into the second half and the

Kiwi striker Leo Bertos was able to complete a solo run up the field, striking the ball beautifully from the 18 metre mark into the right corner of the goal, putting his team ahead 2-0.

In the 60th minute, to spectators' amazement, the referee chose to give Aussie striker Heath Gillett his second yellow card for the match, after a dubious infringement on the opposition causing him to be sent off.

The Kiwis sealed the game in the 80th minute when the Australian goalkeeper left his line to clear the ball, it was New Zealand's midfielder, Luke James, who got onto the clearance and lofted the ball well over the goalkeeper's head, taking their lead and victory to 3-0.

"It's brilliant, it's been a dream of mine and many New Zealanders to beat the Aussies and we're just lucky that we did it today, it was a great performance," said Kiwi captain, Andrew Levick.

"We didn't deserve to win, they deserved to win they were the better side, so all credit to them. We can do better, we have a good side and we can turn it around in the next game," added Australian coach, Chris James.

And Graham Cooke reports that the New Zealand opened their Australian tour with an emphatic 7-2 win over the ACT AIS side based in Canberra, with seven of the tourists getting a goal each. The match was virtually over after only 25 minutes, when the Kiwis found themselves 5-1 up.

The win follows on from a convincing 3-1 win over the Auckland U19 side which included six of the Youth All-Whites that had just returned from the World Cup Oceania play-offs in Western Samoa on Tuesday.

The Kiwis controlled the game for long spells, with plenty of short passes and lots of running off the ball — not allowing their opponents to cope with the pattern play. All 17 members of the squad were used in the game.

Stand-out players included Michael Wilson and Jamie How who ran tirelessly in the windy 27 degree conditions.

Final score: New Zealand Schools 7 ACT Institute of Sport 2 Bertos 7min, How 9min, Wilson 14min, Killen 20min, Levick 25min, Evans 39min, Bridges (75min)

THE WEST HAM UNITED SOCCER ACADEMY

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Under 18 and Under 21

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Mon: Oct 26, Wed: Oct 28, Fri: Oct 30

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE

Under 13: Fri: Oct 16, Sun: Oct 18,

Fri: Oct 23, Sun: Oct 25, Fri: Oct 30, Sun: Nov 1

Under 14: Tue: Oct 13, Thur: Oct 15

Tue: Oct 20, Thur: Oct 22, Tue: Oct 27, Thur: Oct 29

Under 15: Mon: Oct 12, Wed: Oct 14

Mon: Oct 19, Wed: Oct 21, Mon: Oct 26, Wed: Oct 28

Under 16: Tue: Oct 27, Thur: Oct 29, Sun: Nov 1

Mon: Nov 2, Wed: Nov 4, Thur: Nov 5

at Ashley Brown Reserve,

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Australian News

GLORY DOWN MAROCCHI'S MEN

By Richard Kreider

Perth Glory wrapped up Ericsson Cup pre-season preparations last Saturday with a tough 2-0 victory over the WA State side in a Rotary Charity Shield match at Joondalup Arena.

Although Glory coach Bernd Stange was far from impressed with the team's performance, he was pleased to see that his charges were able to cope with the physical aspect in what was at times a fierce encounter.

No less than six of the State players were once on the Glory books; Robert Zabica, Paul McVittie, Marc Wingell, Doug Ithier, Peter Vukmirovic and Craig Naven.

Vasko Trpceviski felt the full brunt of the State side's tackling tenacity in the 24th minute when he received an injury to his right knee after a strong challenge from McVittie. The midfielder failed to shake off the knock and had to be replaced by Vince Tana.

The game was only two minutes old when Vas

Kalogeracos had a glancing header well saved by Zabica.

The West's best chance of the opening half came in the 32nd minute when Craig Deans returned a corner-kick clearance with a powerful volley, but Glory opened the scoring five minutes before the interval from a free-kick which Vukmirovic conceded just outside the box for dangerous play.

Michael Garcia, who has made tremendous progress since overcoming a long-term knee injury, found the top left-hand corner of Zabica's net with a glorious rising strike that drew justified appreciation from the 3,000 crowd.

Despotovski came close to increasing Glory's advantage in the 56th minute from another close-range free-kick, but his curling shot was smartly parried away by Zabica.

After both Carl McDarby and Trim Morgan missed the easiest of equalising chances in the 75th minute from near the goal-line, substitute John Markovski sank the State team with his side's second goal in the dying seconds.

OLYMPIC LAUNCH SPECTACULAR

By Rebecca Stanton

What a way to kick off the 1998/99 season, with glitz and glamour the Sydney Olympic launch on Tuesday evening went off with a bang.

Players, sponsors and supporters mingled freely throughout the night enjoying drinks, fine food and light entertainment, while taking in the a tremendous

Jason Culina.

The night's MC, Johnny Warren, kept the pace of the night flowing, he also did a fabulous job introducing each player, giving guests a quick background on their profile before they were auctioned.

I even took the time to catch up with the assistant coach, John Sentas who was really enjoying the night.

"These functions always help build good team spirit, and it's good all the players are on board tonight and I think they will be on board for all the functions in the



Olympic's Adam Ciantar with fan Bindi (left) and Soccer Weekly's Rebecca Stanton.

HAVE YOUR SAY WHERE'S WALLY

I have been supporting Sydney Olympic for as long as I can remember. Through the good and bad times I such as other have done in the past remained loyal to the club. Through my company I sponsor Sydney Olympic.

I have a few questions which I would like answered.

First of all why has Walter Ardone left the club? Olympic has remained tight lipped about it, was it his decision if so why? He was easily there amongst the top two, he and Emerton were the standouts.

I had the pleasure of being seated at the same table as Walter at the club's sponsor presentations at Eastern Suburbs Club.

He was the most professional athlete I have ever had the pleasure of speaking to. By the end of the night he had all the women at the table eating out of the palm of his hand.

I can't comprehend why he has left. I like many others need to know, why? I am extremely disappointed that Walter will not be wearing the blue and white.

Maybe the club is not as professional as it makes out, the way it has handled this is wrong.

The supporters should have been informed. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Walter all the very best of luck and maybe there is something we can do to bring him back.

Disgruntled fan

IT'S A JOKE

After following the '98 Oceania Championship (often with much difficulty) it is not hard to imagine that if Terry Venables and David Hill had still been in charge at Soccer Australia the howls for resignation would have been loud and violent.

Therefore, who are we now to blame for the pathetic crowds, abysmal media marketing and downright poor performance of our so-called home based players in the Nations Cup Final against New Zealand in Brisbane this week?

Has the fact that Hill and Venables have been away from the helm of the good ship 'Soccer Australia' for such a short time left her drifting not only without a rudder but with tattered sails?

In simple terms, for us here in Australia, the Confederations Cup, to be contested in Mexico next year, is only eclipsed by the Olympics and World Cup.

Perhaps the constant baying of those administrators and media types who had constantly called for Hill's and Venables' blood, and criticised the Confederations Cup, have finally

got their way.

Alas, without participating in a strong and consistent competition in the Asia region antipodean soccer will be always struggling in the wilderness.

Apart from the obvious loss of dollars, Australia's claims for a more sympathetic regional passage to the World Cup have been battered by this recent debacle.

I would hate to think that there are some administrators and players who do not take representing their country seriously enough, but questions need to be asked and answered.

Perhaps those in charge at Soccer Australia can start by lifting the profile of the national competition in a truly national way. We need more games, a viable 'Cup' competition and some marketing of those home based players who can become 'local' icons.

Gemma Higgins,
Ngunnawal, ACT.

atmosphere created at Sydney's Waters Edge restaurant at Pier One.

A more perfect venue couldn't have been chosen, allowing guests to enjoy the breathtaking views of a well lit Sydney Harbour.

New coach, new strip, new players, new sponsors and now turning professional all seems too hard to comprehend but according to the players this is only the beginning of what so far seems to be an exciting concept.

New coach Branko Culina has worked extremely hard getting the players into shape for the coming season and although they are looking good and are super fit, the hard work still remains ahead of them.

"Branko's a very professional man not just the way he coaches but his whole outlook on the game, on and off the field and the players are going to take a little time to get used to that, but once they do the while team will benefit," said Olympic defender, Adam Ciantar.

The main event of the night was to auction the Olympic players. The person or sponsor who buys the player who wins the end of the season Club Player of the Year will receive half the total cash created by the auction.

Before the auction took place I was able to mingle with a few of the players and get an inside view on who they thought would make the most money.

"Oh you have to put your money on Emerton, he's the most popular player so far so I'd give it to him," commented Norman Tome.

"One of the new guys Adem Poric, or one of the young guys either Leo or Nick Carle," stated Scott Bailey.

"Probably Brett Emerton because he's the most high profile player at the club everyone knows him as a Young Socceroo, Socceroo and an Olyroo," added Adam Ciantar.

Well I guess some of the players had some kind of inside knowledge, to little surprise, Brett Emerton the last player to be auctioned did of course make two thousand dollars which was the highest bid for the night.

A lot of the other players enjoyed the auction and even a few of them put in a bid for themselves which was quite amusing. However, captain Peter Tsekenis made one thousand dollars along with new young gun

future, and I'm looking forward to a big season," said Olympic's assistant coach.

Towards the end of the night I finally was able to get Olympic captain, Peter Tsekenis, on his own to have a one-on-one chat.

Tsekenis informs me that all the players are thrilled at the club's decision to turn professional.

"Being professional for the players is a dream and doing it in Australia is very important, it holds you here in Australia rather than going overseas."

Peter has been at Olympic for the past eight years and ever since he's been captain he has become aware of the extra responsibilities involved.

"There is pressure being captain you have to take responsibility for a lot of the players and the result, you have to be one of the motivators for the team. It definitely starts off the park, you have to earn respect and make sure your players are all happy and go on as a unit."

Peter assures me that his ultimate future goal would be to win the National Soccer League as captain for Olympic.

"I think it's time the Club wins a championship, which will be a real highlight for me. Also if I play well I'd like to give an overseas club ago for a few years, and if that happens that will be my ultimate dream."

Congratulations to Olympic for having the courage to trying something different, the night was a great success and could only benefit the club's new image.



Nick Carle and Norman Tome.

Australian Preview

ADELAIDE CITY

By Rob Pepicelli of 5RTI

The man is back and that's got to be good for Adelaide City: I am talking of course of Zoran Matic. Matic in the last couple of years has coached Collingwood to a Johnnie Walker Cup win and last season taken Marconi Stallions to a creditable third position, and his record at City is second to none.

His reason for not staying with Marconi was business commitments in South Australia.

He has a mixture of experience and youth in this up and coming Ericsson Cup season, with Soccerroo representatives Jason Petkovic, Damian Mori, Carl Veart (back with the club after a stint in England), Milan Ivanovic (has been an icon at the club, we could see him playing his last year with the Zebras) and not forgetting Captain Soccerroo and captain of Adelaide City Alex Tobin (right).

Youngsters of the calibre of Angelo Costanzo, Dino Mennillo and Brad Hassell have been with the club for a while and are sure to take that next step up and become an important part of the Adelaide City's line up.

Matic has also given some South Australian Premier League players a chance to trial, one player of note was recently crowned Premier League player of the year Lachlan Campbell.

He has had a fantastic season with his local club Birkalla and is sure to be signed up, others to do well is Andy Leane (son of former Adelaide City striker David Leane) who must have impressed Zoran Matic with his pace and skills in a recent trial game against State league club Salisbury (Zebras winning 4-0.)

Another player to watch out for this season is teenager David Terminello who was picked up last season from the South Australian Sports Institute, at 17 years of age he is certainly very creative and skilful and has a bright future ahead of him.

I am predicting a slow start for Adelaide City, but I am sure they will come home full of running, any team coached by Zoran Matic especially around finals time can never be written off, particularly with so many talented youngsters coming through the ranks.



Squad for the 1998/99 Ericsson Cup Season

Goalkeepers: Jason Petkovic, Anthony Bredon, Ben Moore (On Trial)

Defenders: Bradley Armour, Mark Yates, Milan Ivanovic, Alex Tobin (Captain), Angelo Costanzo, Ross Verschoor, Michael Cartwright, Daniel Menechella (On Trial), Lachlan Campbell (On Trial), Travis Dodd (Injured out for possibly six weeks)

Midfielders: Bradley Hassell, Dino Mennillo, Mark Brazzale, David Terminello, Damian Stam (On Trial)

Forwards: Damian Mori, Carl Veart, Andy Leane (On Trial), John Cutillo (On Trial) Formerly from Adelaide Sharks)

Outs: John Gibson (Adelaide Sharks), Michael Brooks, Les Pogliacomi and Kosta Salapaidis (Wollongong Wolves), Michael Pirone (Overseas), Nick Sabljak (Croatian Club), Scott Thomas (Newcastle), Kris Trajanovski (Marconi)



ADELAIDE SHARKS

By Rob Pepicelli of 5RTI

Adelaide Sharks have appointed former Marconi boss Manfred Schaefer on a one-year deal, and Manfred truly knows that a final six berth is the only way the club can be considered successful this season.

The Sharks have been busy on the recruiting scene with the signings of Derek Pomer (below) from Sydney Olympic, Paul Souris from Marconi Stallions, John Gibson from cross-town rival Adelaide City. They have also secured the signing of Hamilton Thorp from English club Portsmouth.

Further, Manfred has invited exciting young striker Joel Porter from

Premier league club Croydon Kings to trial (remember you read about him first in Soccer Weekly in the off-season) and promising young strong goalkeeper Mate Maric from local club Raiders is also trialling.

Returning to the club after a 18-month absence due to injury is tall strong stopper Robbie Slager.

The Adelaide Sharks have announced their captain for season 98/99; Branko Milosevic was voted team captain and goalkeeper David Miller club captain. Last year's captain Con Kokkinopitis is said to be very supportive of Milosevic which bodes well for team morale.

Players to watch out for this season for the Sharks will be Corey Artone, with two seasons under his belt, and with a bit more consistency, Corey can certainly be a match winner on the day, 19 year old Paul Pezos, a versatile player capable of playing in any position, yes even as a goalkeeper as we saw him twice don the keeper gloves last season (due to injury and send off).

Their strike power of Alex Duric and Hamilton Thorp will be very interesting with both players capable of scoring a bag full of goals.

Add the never-say-die attitude of Con Kokkinopitis and the silky skills of Branko Milosevic, new owner of the Sharks Con Makris is hoping they can win their second



ADELAIDE SHARKS

Squad for the 1998/99 Ericsson Cup Season

Goalkeepers: David Miller (Club Captain), Nathan Wildy, Mate Maric (On Trial)

Defenders: Frank Tibaldi, Paul Souris, Alex Kuzmanovic, Richard Alagich, Paul Pezos, Alex Castro, Robbie Slager, Con Kokkinopitis

Midfielders: Derek Pomer, Branko Milosevic (Team Captain), Corey Artone, Aaron Westervelt, John Gibson

Forwards: Hamilton Thorp, Alex Duric, Adrian Iandiorio, Joel Porter (On Trial)

Outs: Nathan Day (Sydney Utd.), Andrew Borghetto (Newcastle), Jimmy Tsekenis (South Melbourne), Pablo Cardozo (Sydney Olympic), Jamie Perin (Retired), Bill Misailidis (Reported to be trialling with Perth Glory), George Kollas (Delisted), John Cutillo (trailing with Adelaide City), Lou Hristodoulou (Gone to Greece)



championship since the inception of the National league, when in 1978 they became champions of Australia led by the inspirational Peter Boyle in midfield.



SOCCER TRIALS 1999 SEASON

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Nick Poreca — (W) 9756 2522 (M) 015 109 527

Youth League — Division 1

Youth League Co-ordinator Osvaldo El Ali

Saturday 24th & 31st October

Saturday 7th & 14th November

U13s — 9am ♦ U14s — 11am U15s — 1pm ♦ U16s — 3pm

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John Palmano — (M) 018 221 131
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ALL TRIALS ARE TO BE HELD AT THE ABRUZZI FIELD
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LEVEL 2 COACHING QUALIFICATION REQUIRED

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Australian Preview

SAMBA SOCCER TIME ACROSS AUSTRALIA

In part two of the Samba Soccer preview, the Four Diegos (right) cast a gaze across the rest of Australia as the league enters the calm before the storm of what promises to be a cracking start to the season at Spirit Park on Friday night

Adelaide City Zebras

Strengths: A miserly defence; A miserly midfield; and a miserly forward line. Just the way their miserly, master coach, Zoran Matic likes it.

Weaknesses: Question marks over whether the local nursing home will release veteran sweeper, Milan Ivanovic, for training sessions and matches.

Four Diegos Tip: Captain, Alex Tobin's timeless hair style. Its time for a change Alex!

Goal machine, Damien "Frogger" Mori's nickname. They would never go for a name like that in Brazil!

Four Diegos Tip: Some say that Matic possesses the personality of a dour, tightfisted, finance minister in the Russian parliament. whilst this may well be true, there's no doubt that this, our favourite comrade can coach.

The Black and White croweaters will not be eating humble pie this season — We say, top three finish, just how Matic likes it!

Adelaide Sharks

Strengths: Their scary nickname.

Coach, Manfred Schaffer's magnificent sideburns. They can be used by the Shark's promotional men to target the South Australian, Elvis Presley fan club market.

Weaknesses: The Adelaide Shark's mascot looks as intimidating as 'Flipper' frolicking in a bubble bath.

Four Diegos Tip: We say Manfred's plan to use re-runs of Jaws I and II to motivate his charges will not work.

It's straight to the bottom of the harbour for this school loving fish. We say a bottom four finish for Manfred's men in the new season.

Perth Glory

Strengths: A plethora of McDonald's family restaurants to satisfy the appetite of new recruit,

Macarthur Rams

Junior League and Super Youth League

TRIALS

at LYNWOOD PARK
Rangers Road, St Helens Park

U/11s Sunday 18 October 8.30am

U/12s Sunday 18 October 10.30am

U/13s Tues/Thurs 13/15 October 6.00pm

U/14s Tues/Thurs 13/15 October 7.30pm

U/15s Mon/Wed 12/14 October 6.00pm

U/16 Mon/Wed 12/14 October 7.30pm

Please note:

1. Players must be ready to start at the above time
2. Trials will be conducted over more than one week

Information:

☎ (02) 4625 1333 weekdays

ONLY between 9.30am and 2.30pm



John "Mactime" Markovski.

The willingness of their supporters to strip for the club.

Weaknesses: The willingness of their supporters to strip for the club and invade the pitch while the game is still in progress, and in front of a "live" Australia — wide television audience.

Four Diegos Tip: With a good dose of East German, no pain, no gain discipline introduced by newly appointed coach, Bernd Stange, this underachieving franchise is about to undergo a transformation from 'Sandgroper No Hoper' to 'Glorious Glory Groper'.

We say the Perth Groopers, everyone's second favourite club, is destined for a top six finish.

Newcastle Breakers

Strengths: Under former coach, John Kosmina, they established a three year plan designed to ensure long term success.

Weaknesses: The only problem is that they are now in the fourth year of their three year plan.

Four Diegos Tip: Unfortunately, the Breakers will break the hearts of their passionate supporters once again in the coming season.

We say hand them the wooden spoon now. Last place beckons for the Breaker boys.

Marconi Stallions

Strengths: Great lasagne & lambrusco served at the Marconi social club.

The teenager cheerleaders, "The Stallionettes" are one year older.

Marconi can refer to themselves as, the former club of Italy's World Cup goalscoring sensation, Christian Vieri, for eternity.

Weaknesses: Marconi veteran cool cat striker, Francis Awari's, very ordinary, guitar playing and disco dancing.

Four Diegos Tip: We say, there will be no chance of a trip to the glue factory for the Stallions this season. With Farina a top, riding sidesaddle, and whip firmly in hand, our tip is that they will run a strong fourth on a heavy track.

Sydney United

Strengths: A defence led by uncompromising Velimir "Russian Cosmonaut" Kupresak.

A midfield organised by Robbie "Angry Anderson" Hooker.

A strike force spearheaded by Abbas "The Goal Machine Guru" Saad.

The club as a player/coach, David Mitchell, who has an inherent dislike for opposition goalkeepers. This becomes an important factor in injury time of a cup final, when Big Mitch is challenging for a 50/50 ball with an unsuspecting and trusting opposition custodian.

Weaknesses: Having a coach who is tougher and more aggressive than many of his squad.

Four Diegos Tip: Chairman, John

Hewson and his GST (Great Soccer Team) will levy a no nonsense, tough tackling tax on all its opponents. The Edensor Park 'loophole' could be the downfall of any Ericsson Cup club looking for a rebate.

We say that big Mitch and his team will beat down the door to the top six leaving a few opposition goalkeepers in their wake.

Northern Spirit

Strengths: Ability to entice legendary Australians like Robbie Slater and Graham Arnold back home. Still to come, Rolf Harris (creative midfielder), Sir Les Paterson (Hard nosed central defender) and Kylie Minogue (Water girl / Masseur / singer of the team song after the game / aerobics instructor)

Weaknesses: The club's inability to fit Eric Cantona into their salary cap.

Four Diegos Tip: Love the name; Love the concept; Love the fact that Robbie Slater and Graham Arnold are back home; unfortunately I don't like their chances of immediate success. We say, mid table at best for the 'Spirit' in their inaugural year.

Sydney Olympic

Strengths: In appointing the young and impressive Branco Culina and former Socceroos coach, Frank Arok to head their coaching staff, Olympics new owners, 'The Five White Knights in Valiant Safaris' led by car dealer, Jim Politis, have been able to assemble a coaching duet that rivals the great duets of our time — Mark and Mindy, Renee' and Renata, and Bill and Ted's Bogus Adventure.

Weaknesses: There is a concern that the club's match day peanut man, souvalki and lamb on the spit outlet and overall home ground capacity, may struggle to cater for the anticipated crowd at the opening ceremony of Sydney 2000 Olympics.



The Four Diegos predict a top four for Sydney Olympic.

Four Diegos Tip: If Culina's combine can keep their goals against total to less than their coaching casualties, takeover bids and internal upheavals, there are in for a fine season!

This Renee' and Renata love song will go all the way to the top four with a bullet!

Canberra Cosmos

Strengths: The return to Aussie soccer club coaching by Rale "Sulimen Rushdie" Rasic (the Iranians have been after him since 1974), can only be good for a club with limited resources and an ingrained losing mentality.

Weaknesses: We get worried about a club whose all time record top scorer is legendary Socceroo captain, Paul Wade, who was more recognised for his tough tackling than his clinical finishing.

Four Diegos Tip: The Cosmos' prospects are as good as the Marijuana Party winning the federal election.

We say the Cosmos are destined to finish bottom two on the 'how to vote' card and bottom three in the league.

Wollongong Wolves

Strengths: Exciting striker, Kosta Salapisidis "Pelvic Trust" goal celebrations and midfielder, Alvin Ceccoli's remarkable resemblance to temperamental Bulgarian bad boy striker, Hristo Stoichkov.

Weaknesses: Crowd numbers at Brandon Park are inversely proportional to the size of the swell at the local south coast surf beach.

Four Diegos Tip: At home under a full moon, the Wolves transform into a pack of howling, bloodthirsty, Werewolves prepared to rip any Ericsson Cup opponent apart, whereas away from home, they inexplicably turn into a pack of stray mangy dogs with rotten teeth ... Travel is the key for Nick's Gong Show.

We say the Werewolves will be knocking on the door of the top six in the coming season.

Brisbane Strikers

Strengths: New coach, "Delicate" John Kosmina, has the pedigree to transform the Strikers from party boys living on past successes to party animals looking for some more Ericsson Cup glory. Plenty of Israeli central defenders will attest to that.

Weaknesses: Club mascot, "Thor" looks more intimidating than the Brisbane players.

Four Diegos Tip: Despite the fact that Kossie could be the "Berocca" the Banana Benders need to cure their premiership hangover, we still say a mid-table finish is the best the Strikers can hope for in the coming season.

Australian Preview

SYDNEY OLYMPIC

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic this season will launch its most serious assault in the club's 21 year history for the National League championship.

For many long years Sydney Olympic has been referred to as the 'sleeping giant of Australian Soccer'.

Only in 1990 Olympic was able to win its one and only National League championship under the careful guidance of Englishman Mickey Hickman, currently back in England as assistant coach with Wolves.

During the off season the club was partly privatised with the buy-in by 'Five White Knights' a private consortium spearheaded by motor magnate of City Ford fame, Mr Nick Politis.

Step 1 by the 'Five White Knights' was to wipe out all debts, believed to have been around the \$1million mark.

Step 2 Mr Politis appointed former Australian World Cup captain and television analyst, Johnny Warren as the club's consultant.

Step 3 Warren recommended that the club immediately appoint former national coach Frank Arok as Technical Director.

Step 4 Arok strongly recommended that Branko Culina be appointed as the club's senior coach.

Olympic's administration has been completely overhauled with no less than six fulltime employees.

Culina with Arok during the off season, either sold or released no less than 14 players from last season's squad, electing to make just half of that amount in new signings.

Two of the newly signed players are from England, the former St George youngster Adan Poric who was sold to Sheffield Wednesday six years ago by Arok, and the highly experienced Mark Brennan, who has more than 370 matches under his belt, having played with Manchester City, Middlesbrough, Ipswich Town and Oldham.

Brennan, a former England Youth international, arrived five weeks ago from China where he played for the club Winaway.

Both are midfielders and both are powerful enforcers for Olympic's 'middle line', an area, that had been for so long neglected by the team.

Ball-playing striker Pablo Cardozo returns back home after an absence of three years with the Adelaide Sharks and more recently with Rapid Vienna in Austria.

Another exciting and recent signing by Olympic is the coach's son, mobile 18 year old midfielder Jason Culina, already having represented Australia in the Youth and Olympic Games squads.

Culina senior told Soccer Weekly last night: "I expect Sydney Olympic to be competitive and we will have much ground to recover from last season's ninth position."

"Players are responding very well to the task so far and I believe that we have recruited well and wisely with a solid mixture of youth and experience."

"How long will it take the seven new players to gel, will of course take time."

"We are fully aware that we will be handicapped as well with the absence on international duty of the likes of Brett Emerton, Nick Carle, Jason Culina and Adam Poric. This could prove a problem for us when the time comes."

"We no doubt will need depth and quality of depth. I have estimated that Brett (Emerton) could miss as many as 12 of our League matches due to his international commitments with Raul Blanco's various national squads."

"Adrian Cervinski as you know will be out of action till at least Christmas and my son Jason won't be ready for another three weeks following the break in his leg. He's already started training but it will take a while yet."

Meanwhile the Club's astute coaching patriarch, the 67 year old Arok, observed: "I like this Englishman Mark Brennan very much."

"He does everything with great quality, clarity and precision."

"He's assertive and a real organiser. As well he is a excellent passer of the ball."

"I feel that this Sydney Olympic squad is a far better squad than the one I had at Marconi when I won the League Championship there five years ago."

"But we will see. Time will tell, but I can assure you that we are really working hard to bring some success to this club," stated Arok.

Arok however made one thing very clear, a question on everyone's mind, just who is the boss at Olympic?

"My capacity is a technical one. Branko is in charge of the squad, solely."

"Branko will be selecting the teams and devising all the tactical aspects at each match."

"My capacity reaches far in a different and much broader direction as I am here to implement and install a whole new Soccer infrastructure."

"My job is to lay new, sound and solid foundations for the overall structure of Soccer in Sydney Olympic. The bigger overall picture. It is a technical task."

"Branko has one job to do and I have another."

"There is no professional conflict."

"We have mutual respect for one another's area. It's that simple," ended Arok.

Barring unforeseen contingencies, Olympic with the studious and ambitious modern-thinking Culina at the helm, plus the vision, energy and stability of Arok behind the scenes, yes we can see light at long last at the end of the tunnel.

And it's not a train coming the other way.

Olympic will be a definite force this season in the National League.

Coach: Branko Culina.
Captain: Peter Tsekenis.

Players Signed: Jimmy Kourtis, Mark Brennan, Jason Culina, Adam Poric, Adrian Cervinski, Pablo Cardozo, Scott Thomas.

Players sold, released or retired: Bobby Catlin, Paul Carter, Jean Paul De Marigny, Danny Barbalace, Huseyin Bayhan, Ben Willard, Kane Rastell, Walter Ardore, Anore Rodrigues, Eric Hristodoulou, Fernando Zerda, Steve Eagleton, Derek Poimer, Steve Karavatakis.

MARCONI FAIRFIELD

By John Economos

Former Australian World Cup striker Frank Farina this season has taken over the coaching reins of Australia's biggest club in the Ericsson Cup, a club that has always demanded nothing short of excellence.

Despite his tender age of having seen just 34 summers, this gigantic challenge has not daunted Farina's aspirations.

Young he may be, but Farina is endowed with superior experience, especially in modern coaching techniques, that others of his profession double his age do not have.

Since leaving Australian shores almost 10 years ago to embark on a fulltime playing career, Farina was engaged in the top Euro Leagues of Belgium, Italy, and France prior to his return to Australia two years ago to bring down the curtain of his playing career with the Brisbane Strikers.

And what a wise move that was.

In his very first season as player-coach of the Strikers, not only did the fabulous Farina scored stacks of goals, but even had the audacity to guide the Queenslanders right into the 1996 grand Final, and win it if you please.

From the moment he signed up during the off season with Marconi, Farina made it very clear to the officials that he was not a "cheque book coach" and would be very selective in signing up new players, if any.

The young coach zipped into the market to snap up exciting midfielder Danny Invincible, tough 'screener' Marcus Phillips and intelligent striker Kris Trajanovski.

Just three signings despite having lost five players from last season's squad.

The former international goalscorer said: "I'm shooting to qualify Marconi for the 'Top Six' first of all."

"That is an immediate expectation that a club such as Marconi always demands."

"From there we will take it step by step."

"One cannot make any reckless predictions in Soccer as so many things can happen. For example a long string of injuries can be a most telling factor and easily cripple any team's ambitions."

"After that we will wait and see."

"But in all honesty our preseason preparation has not been ideal. Not the least."

"We've already experienced early injuries plus international training camps have disrupted our programme."

"The National League this season will be a very strong one."

"I firmly believe that at least nine, if not ten of the 15 teams can easily win it."

"We all believe at Marconi that this League will be the hardest competition to win for a long time," Farina predicted.

Last season under Zoran Matic, Marconi was just edged out in the semis by newcomers Carlton, to be denied a spot in the Grand Final against minor League champions South Melbourne.

With midfield captain Brad Maloney last season scoring heaps of goals, lanky striker Francis Awaritefe having his very best season in eight years of Australian Soccer since arriving from England, plus the immaculate precision play of their former South Korean World Cup sweeper Pan Keun Kim (right) bracing the defence, Marconi looms as a definite League championship challenger.

Youngsters such as Ante Covic, Buddy Farrah, Daniel Uchino, Mauro Van Cylenberg, Christian Care and Joey Bruni, promoted into Marconi's NSL squad last season by Matic, will all have that much more experience under their belts to face with added confidence their task ahead 'on the road to glory'.

Marconi is a definite threat for the 1998-99 League championship. The young gun-coach Farina, has been there, done that, which makes the world of difference.

Coach: Frank Farina.
Captain: Brad Maloney.

Players Signed: Danny Invincible, Marcus Phillips, Kris Trajanovski.

Players sold, released or retired: Mario Ansaldi, Luke Casserly, Michael Cunico, Joey Merino, Paul Souris.



MARCONI FAIRFIELD/SOUTHERN DISTRICTS



SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE TRIALS
FOR THE 1999 SEASON
BLAMFIELD OVAL
Elizabeth Drive
ASHCROFT
(Entry from Maxwells Ave)

GRADE 13

6.00pm. Tuesday 13th October 1998.
9.00am. Saturday 17th October 1998.
6.00pm. Tuesday 20th October 1998.
9.00am. Saturday 24th October 1998.

GRADE 14

7.00pm. Tuesday 13th October 1998.
10.00am. Saturday 17th October 1998.
7.00pm. Tuesday 20th October 1998.
10.00am. Saturday 24th October 1998.

GRADE 15

6.00pm. Thursday 15th October 1998.
9.00am. Sunday 18th October 1998.
6.00pm. Thursday 22nd October 1998.
9.00am. Sunday 25th October 1998.

GRADE 16

7.00pm. Thursday 15th October 1998.
10.00am. Sunday 18th October 1998.
7.00pm. Thursday 22nd October 1998.
10.00am. Sunday 25th October 1998.

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POOL A
1. New Zealand
2. Samoa
3. Fiji

POOL B
1. Australia
2. Papua New Guinea
3. American Samoa

Round 1 - Friday 9 October 1998

Pool A
6pm New Zealand v Samoa
Fiji bye Papua New Guinea bye

Pool B
4pm American Samoa v Australia

Round 2 - Sunday 11 October 1998

Pool A
2pm Fiji v New Zealand
Samoa bye American Samoa bye

Pool B
4pm Australia v Papua New Guinea

Round 3 - Tuesday 13 October 1998

Pool A
4pm Samoa v Fiji
New Zealand bye

Pool B
6pm American Samoa v Papua New Guinea
Australia bye

Semi-Finals - Thursday 15 October 1998

4pm Winner Pool B v Runner-Up Pool A
6pm Winner Pool A v Runner-Up Pool B

Finals - Saturday 17 October 1998

12noon Playoff for Third
2pm Final

The Oceania Champion qualifies as the Oceania team to participate in the 3rd FIFA Women's World Cup to be held in the USA, 19 June-10 July 1999.
All above matches to be played at Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland NZL.
All times are Auckland times. New Zealand is AEST plus 3 hours.

BROWN NAMES HIS TWENTY FOR QUALIFIERS

The 20-member Australian Team to contest the Oceania World Cup Qualification Tournament in Auckland was announced last Tuesday by National Coach Greg Brown.

The Matildas will be competing to become the Oceania region's sole representative at the Third FIFA Women's World Cup to be hosted by Olympic gold medallist nation USA in June/July 1999.

Australia's National Squad has been centralised at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra in full-time training since July. Their preparation was enhanced with the recent tour to North Korea which resulted in a hard-fought series win over one team which has already qualified for 1999.

There are two changes in the team from that which toured North Korea. Midfielder Lisa Casagrande comes in, and replaces Kim Revell who has been ordered to take three weeks complete rest for her nagging back injury which flared up in Pyongyang.

Veteran goalkeeper Tracey Wheeler has gained selection ahead of young Joanne Butland. Butland has toured twice overseas as Australia's second keeper but is yet to make her international debut.

All but Revell and midfielder Bryony Duus were fit and available for selection. "Selections should always be a tough decision as the squad is ever improving," said Brown.

"The team in North Korea acquitted themselves tremendously well, and this is reflected in selections

this time. Lisa Casagrande has improved since to that tour, and Kim Revell is suffering an injury. Jo Butland has had a thumb injury, and experienced Tracey Wheeler has improved being here (at the AIS) which has given her an edge."

If results go according to expectations, Australia will clash with New Zealand in the one-off, tie final. "We're not really focusing on the tie at this stage," said Brown.

"We're concentrating on peaking at the time. We don't want to focus on New Zealand early on. However, we do know they've been working very hard, and we expect them to be improved from when they were here in November."

The Matildas arrived in Auckland on Sunday for the first few days will train heavily. Training and relaxation in readiness for Australia's opening match on Friday against the unknown American Samoa.

Although the smaller nations should not be a real threat, Australia cannot afford to be complacent. Since training commenced at the Matildas have only played international matches against good men's or boys' teams plus one against a NSW WSL select. Facing the quality island nations, the Aussies will need to make that mental adjustment. "We can't take the game lightly," said Brown.

"We need to ensure we keep the intensity now we're so used to playing at high intensity

QUALIFIERS — MUST WIN SITUATION

The future of women's soccer in Australia hangs in the balance of this one tournament — the Oceania World Cup Qualifiers.

When that whistle blows signalling full-time in the final on the afternoon of Saturday 17 October, it must be the Aussies who are celebrating. Anything less does not bear thinking about.

Government funding to sport is very much performance based. We might as well wave goodbye to everything our sport has achieved over these last four years if we fail to come away with the goods in Auckland.

On paper, the eighth-ranked Matildas should win. But there are no guarantees in football. The Aussies still need to put the performance in on the day.

The Kiwis have huge home advantage. They know they have been left behind in recent years and are ranked at about number thirty in the world. They continue to struggle along with very little funding and players still pay their own way. But sacrifice and hard times build inner strength and we already know the Kiwis have great passion. They would love nothing better than to crush the Aussies. New Zealand need to qualify for the World Cup in order to have a chance of making it to the Sydney 2000 Olympics. The Kiwis have absolutely nothing to lose.

HEROFAXES

The Matildas will need all your support in these vital World Cup Qualifiers. Send your good luck messages to the Team as follows -

Attn: Lesley Mann, Australian Women's Soccer Team Manager
Quay West Auckland
Fax 0015-64-9-309 6150

WOMEN'S SOCCER TRIALS

MARCONI FAIRFIELD WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE 1999 TRIALS

WHEN Wednesday 21st October
Friday 23rd October
TIMES 7.30pm — 9pm
WHERE Field No 2 (REAR of Stadium)

CONTACT

Roy Kimber 9670 1753 A/H
John Sevil 9484 6712 A/H

DID YOU KNOW?

The Oceania Qualifiers have gone down to the wire on the two previous occasions — the winner decided on goal difference. New Zealand won through to the 1st World Cup in 1991, with Australia the victors for the 2nd World Cup in 1995.

Both events were contested by Australia, New Zealand, and PNG, with teams playing the other sides twice each. Both times, Australia lost to NZ in the first game, then beat the Kiwis in the other game by the same margin.

Australia's last clash with New Zealand was during the November 1997 Tri-Nations Series. The match in Newcastle ended in a 2-0 victory to Australia after a shaky start.

One player to compete in the Qualifiers was playing in Devonport at the recent National Senior Championship. South Australian midfielder Sandra Pascoe currently lives in Adelaide and holds dual citizenship with her homeland PNG. Pascoe also played for PNG in the 1991 Qualifiers at age 16.

AUSTRALIAN TEAM — WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS 1998

Traci BARTLETT	ACT
Sharon BLACK	SA
Katrina BOYD	NSW
Lisa CASAGRANDE	ACT
Sarah COOPER	ACT
Alicia FERGUSON	QLD
Alison FORMAN	(Denmark)
Sonia GEGENHUBER (c)	QLD
Angela IANNOTTA	(Italy)
Belinda KITCHING	QLD
Julie MURRAY	NSW
Joanne PETERS	NSW
Cheryl SALISBURY	NNSW
Bridgette STARR	NNSW
Kristyn SWAFFER	SA
Anissa TANN-DARBY	NSW
Amy TAYLOR	ACT
Natalie THOMAS	SA
Tracey WHEELER	WA
Shelley YOUNG	NNSW

Sunni Hughes was selected for this team but withdrew due to family illness.

HUGHES LATE WITHDRAWAL — THOMAS CALLED IN

Experienced striker Sunni Hughes was a late withdrawal from the Australian team last Saturday, the eve of the team's departure for Auckland. Debutante Natalie Thomas received the call-up to replace Hughes for the all-important Oceania World Cup Qualifying Tournament.

Hughes decided to pull out of the team after receiving news of a family illness. The 30-year-old is the Matildas' top international goalscorer and a member of the two previous World Cup campaigns. Hughes is Australia's fourth highest-capped player (46 'A' caps / 20 goals) and has made a career as a professional footballer in Japan's L-League for the past four seasons.

Thomas only received the news of her first selection for Australia on the Saturday afternoon, just sixteen hours before taking off. In the shower after work, she was told to get to the team meeting, and was unaware what was happening until she got there.

"I was shocked but extremely happy," said Thomas of her initial reaction. "Now I'm a bit scared, only because I don't know what to expect. I don't know what else to say — I haven't had a chance to think about it."

The 20-year-old was born and raised in outback Broken Hill, and her selection is typical of her meteoric rise to the top. Thomas only took up soccer at age 15 as a 'social sport' and has previously represented South Australia in golf, basketball, hockey and softball. She was discovered by SA ITC Coach Kevin McCormack playing in country carnivals and drafted into the Ansett national league team in late 1996.

Thomas (right) moved to Adelaide in 1997 to train with SASI. Her national league performances last summer earned her one of the coveted full-time scholarships at the AIS.

She will be the only Matilda in Auckland not to have previously played for Australia, but Thomas of all people should be about being thrown in at the deep end.

"Absolutely, I'm going to make the most of this opportunity," she said. "I'm not going to let it go."



WOMEN'S RESERVE GRADE COACH

MARCONI FAIRFIELD WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE 1999 RESERVE GRADE COACH

- ★ Responsible to head coach
- ★ Current Level 2 Certificate (or currently undertaking)
- ★ Send resume to soccer office
- ★ Closing Date 14th October 1998

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Roy Kimber 9670 1753 A/H
John Sevil 9484 6712 A/H

Australian Preview

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

By John Economos

Lee Sterrey, Newcastle Breakers' newly signed 37 year old 'rookie' coach, despite having limited resources at his disposal has promised a battle for all comers.

"Sure I was given a mini budget but I can assure you that we will be putting up a good fight against everyone that comes our way. Let me put it this way, I'm not buying a team, I'm trying hard to build one. I feel very enthusiastic about my players and really looking forward to the challenge.

"I expect many of my players will be very eager to show their wares and that they can play."

Since arriving at his first senior post, Sterrey has had to virtually start from scratch.

For starters Newcastle has lost both of their senior strike force in Clayton Zane and Jason Bennett.

"We have lost no less than eleven players from last season's squad for various reasons, but by the same token I have made eight new and most of them younger signings.

"When I arrived here I started with just seven senior players but have been able to build on this since.

"I believe signing big Bobby Catlin as our goalkeeper plus getting Andy Roberts to come back to Newcastle will inject much needed experience to my young squad.

"Don't worry about Newcastle, if we can string a few good results we will earn respect in the League," Sterrey warned.

Despite the youth in Newcastle's rebuilt squad,

the Breakers narrowly went down 1-2 to Northern Spirit last week in a trial game.

"We have as you know, great parochial support up here. And let me tell you, this Club still holds the record since 1978 for the biggest gate in a League match when the then called Newcastle K.B. United pulled in 18,300 against Sydney Olympic.

"The Newcastle area has for years spawned some great players that went on to play for Australia's national team.

"Ray Baartz, Graham Jennings, David Lowe for example were all great Novocastrians that went on to achieve bigger things.

"Right now I would say I have the youngest squad in the N.S.L. with an average age of about 21.

"And when it comes to support from the electronic and print media, Newcastle just has to be the best in Australia."

The quicker Sterrey can lift Newcastle up the ladder in time, the better, not only for the parochial Novocastrian fans, but also as a boost for the National League.

Newcastle Breakers have appointed their talented attacking defender Shane Pryce as their skipper for the new season.

New Players: Bobby Catlin, Jason Kos, Andy Roberts, Adam Sanderson, Robert Shannon, Johnny Buonavoglia, Andrew Borghetto, Brad Wieczorek, Fouad Umlil.

Players Sold, Released or Retired: Clayton Zane, Eddie Bosnar, Robbie Ironside, Jason Bennett, David Hodgson, Matthew Lowe, Shaun Edwards, Leo Langone, Matthew Austin, Liam Baker, Reece Tolleneare.

CANBERRA COSMOS

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos coach Rale Rasic completed his match preparation for the Ericsson Cup season with a big thank-you to the ACT soccer community for doing so much to support his efforts.

"I have been absolutely delighted with the co-operation I have received locally, he said.

"Local clubs winding down their season have kept their squads together just so they could give us a game.

"We are very isolated in Canberra...it is not like Sydney or Melbourne where the Ericsson Cup squads can play among themselves. We have managed just two matches against sides in our own competition and I thank the Northern Spirit and Perth Glory for making themselves available but it would have been less than adequate without our local friends."

And not all matches have been walk-overs (Weston Creek Royals actually beat their national league opponent), but Rasic believes his team is just about on course after a 6-1 win over Monaro last Thursday night.

"These games have given us the opportunity to look at a succession of young players who have come to us seeking a trial," Rasic said. The only way to test them is under match conditions.

"There are still a couple of vacancies in the Cosmos squad. One could be filled by Nick Mrda, a teenage striker from Perth who looked good against Monaro. Rasic has made no secret of the fact that strike power is a major concern. Peter Buljan is in tremendous form up front, but I have not yet decided who will partner him, he said."

The coach has conducted a quiet revolution at the club since arriving in succession to Branko Culina three quarters of the way through last season. Only a handful of players remain from last season's squad and with 11 members having their origins in the local game, there has never been a greater identity with the ACT community.

"We have to do things professionally and properly," Rasic said. "If we behave like a circus act people will treat us like clowns.

"I have taken an interest in how the office and other back-up services are run, because that is all part of the club. If the players see things are slack off the field, there will be less inclination to work hard on it."

He said this will be a testing season for Lyndsay Wilson and Harry James, retained from last season, and new signing Andrew Clark, who has had a spell in Hong Kong with 517 FC.

"These are players who have served their apprenticeship and must now make a leaders' contribution on the field", he said. "We are a young team generally and I expect an example from them."

He also announced the formation of an apprenticeship scheme, involving some of the youngest members of the current squad, plus others, such as Geoff Howarth of Belconnen United and Canberra Olympic goalkeeper Angelo Konstantinou.

There is some outstanding talent playing locally, and we want to give it a chance to develop into players who could easily still be serving the club in 15 years' time, Rasic said.

This is not a plan for this season, or even for the next two seasons what we are setting up now envisages a Canberra Cosmos as a worthwhile and permanent member of the national league.



Leo Langone ... big things are expected from this player.

BRISBANE STRIKERS

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers have possibly the youngest squad in the Ericsson Cup this year, but coach John Kosmina can't wait for the season to start.

Kosmina loves a challenge and has set the Strikers the goal of making the Top Six in his first season despite the loss of Frank Farina, Troy Cranney, Danny Invincible and Rod Brown.

The veteran of 102 games for Australia and scorer of 43 goals, Kosmina is relishing his new Brisbane role when called in to replace Farina, who left the Strikers on unfriendly terms to join Marconi.

Kosmina and Farina, who will clash in the season opener at Suncorp Stadium on Saturday night, share similar qualities in that they have the uncanny knack of bringing the best out of relative unknowns.

Kosmina leads a Strikers' squad this season which failed to come to grips after their Grand Final triumph two years ago when they lost Alan Hunter, Danny Wright and Gary Phillips through retirement and transfers for last season.

However, the injection of several players from the Queensland Academy of Sport has Kosmina excited, although he concedes he would welcome back Brown if he decided to make a comeback.

"It would be good to have a few name players but I like working with kids," Kosmina said.

"We've got some really good young players coming through and they'll be the big names in the future."

Players like Jade North, Wayne Shros, Glen Kolpak and Aaron Thresfield are names that don't roll off the tongues of local soccer followers, let alone interstate, but Kosmina predicts they all have big futures.

Those four new players will join forces with youngsters Wayne Knipe and Reece Tolleneare who already have tasted the highs and lows of the national league football.

While the Strikers may have an over abundance of youth, they also have the right blend of experience where it counts in defence.

New skipper Glenn Gwynne, who was named in the Socceroos for the recent Oceania Nations Cup will spearhead the defence with regulars Steve Laybutt, Chris Zoricich, Craig Williams and youngster Matt Bell.

Keeper Clint Bolton could also soon find he'll have a strong completed to fight off if negotiations are with local XXXX League club Brisbane City to sign goalkeeper Danny Duke.

"Duke's a hard trainer and he's really impressed me," Kosmina said.

"He'll keep the pressure on Clint all the way," Kosmina acknowledges the Strikers' biggest problem could again fall with its strike power up front, but believes it can be resolved.

"Scoring it a problem for any team," he said.

"Andy Harper is our most experienced player up front but he's not an out and out target man — he's more of a provider now.

"When the Strikers won the grand final they had Farina and Brown up front and that's a combination awfully hard to replace.

"But we'll be very competitive and like any team we want to win every game."

Kosmina has had his share of niggling pre-season mishaps with Nick Meredith fracturing his wrist but the speedy midfielder is expected to be right for the season opener.

"It was only a crack and the plaster's coming off so Nick should be right," Kosmina said.

Kosmina scouted the Oceania Nations Cup series last week and has made enquiries about signing one of New Zealand's All Whites.



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Australian Preview

SYDNEY UNITED

By John Economos

David Mitchell, the Australian triple World Cup striker, starts his second season as player-coach of Sydney United. And for the second time the courageous Mitchell has been saddled with the herculean task during the off-season of rebuilding almost a complete squad.

Last season, his first as player-coach with United, Mitchell (right) had to start from scratch after the Club's first grade squad had been almost totally decimated by raiding clubs that saw United lose no less than eight of the first team line-up.

This season Mitchell again has been struck by another huge exodus of players streaming out of United to raiding clubs.

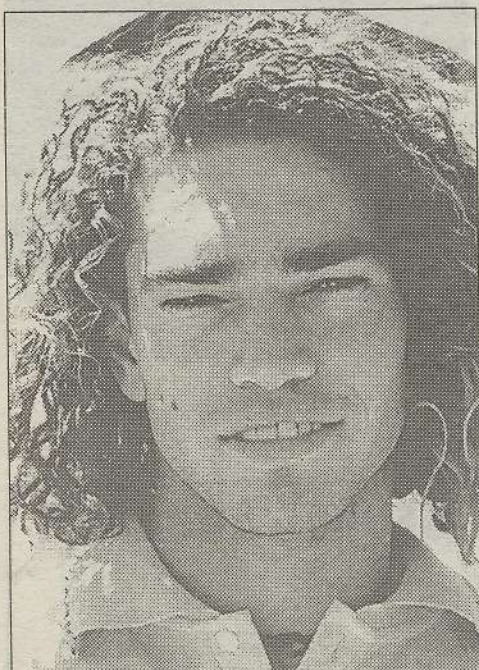
Gone are his star international towering goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac who at long last has secured a European career with Holland's first division side Roda.

Gone as well are experienced defenders Stuart Munro and Mark Rudan, midfielders Jason Culina, Paul Bilokapic, Marcus Phillips plus international utility Robbie Hooker.

Compounding his problems, Mitchell saw his star striker Abbas Saad suffer a crippling leg injury whilst playing for Wollongong Olympic in the NSL's off season, which now threatens to delay his return to the team.

Again faced with very limited resources at his disposal, Big Mitch was forced back to zero and had to start again the arduous task of rebuilding a whole new squad.

With just the ever-green central marker Velimir Kupresak plus experienced defenders David Barrett, Joe Vrkic and Jacob Burns who have remained with the Club, the undaunted Mitchell slowly but surely commenced his recruiting.



Over the past seven weeks Mitchell has picked up former international goalkeeper Mike Gibson from Marconi to be his back-up 'keeper as well as filling the role as the Club's goalkeeping coach.

Mitch quickly scanned the NSW Super League, netting Blacktown's consistent central midfielder Steve Berry and Bankstown's mobile flank midfielder Steve Eagleton.

Mitchell also snared Sydney Olympic's midfielder Walter Ardone (above) and the Adelaide Sharks' midfielder or striker Nathan Day.

Former Sydney United and Sydney Olympic's pacey midfielder Joe Caletta, now back in Sydney after a four year stint with Malaysian and Singaporean clubs, has signed with United, and will surely be able to do a good

job on the left side of midfield. The unyielding Mitchell, who again will have as his



trusted off-sider Laurie McKinna, stated: "It's been tough but we have to keep on fighting. 'That's Soccer. My knee feels OK and I'm looking forward to playing again. I must."

"I believe I still have plenty of Soccer left in me and I know I can do a job upfront."

But all is not gloom and doom for United.



Just recently, in an exhibition match against against Marconi, Sydney United displayed great competitiveness and ultimately defeated Marconi in a penalty shoot-out.

This win provoked a complimentary comment from Marconi's coach and Mitchell's friend, Frank Farina. "Don't worry about Mitch, he'll have his side again challenging strongly. United will be very competitive."

Sydney United on Sunday, led by new captain Velimir Kupresak, will take on Lee Sterrey's visiting Newcastle Breakers at 3pm. at Edensor Park.

Players Signed: Mike Gibson, Nathan Day, Steve Berry, Walter Ardone, Drew Laurence, Danny Townsend, Steve Eagleton, Joe Caletta.

Players Sold, Released or Retired: Zeljko Kalac, John Perosh, Stuart Munro, Mark Rudan, Dino Culina, Marcus Phillips, Paul Bilokapic, Mario Jerman, Robbie Hooker, Marin Galic, Jason Culina, Tony Krslovic.

NORTHERN SPIRIT

By John Economos

Graham Arnold, former Australian World Cup striker and the 'Spirit's inaugural player-coach, will have all eyes trained on him as he guides this latest member club into battle in the Ericsson Cup.

Tossed the huge responsibility of setting up a brand new squad, the four times former World Cup campaigner has recruited wisely and well.

A former carpenter prior to leaving our Australian shores to embark on a European playing career, coupled with his extensive international experience, Big Arnie was well qualified to build the new squad at Spirit.

The tenacious Arnold gave up a lucrative fulltime contract with Eddie Thomson's San Frecce in Hiroshima playing in Japan's J-League to return to Sydney and rapidly set up his brand new playing staff.

Arnold quickly enticed other Australian 'foreign-legionnaires' to link up with him at the Spirit.

Back from England's Wolves came Robbie Slater to be the club's first captain, and from Malaysia came mobile striker Scotty Ollerenshaw to spearhead the attack-line with highly talented marksman, the lanky Clayton Zane (below).

But what could arguably prove to be the coup signing of the season, Arnold was able to snare his former team-mate at Hiroshima, Ian Crook, to come to Sydney.

This former England fulltime pro, formerly of Tottenham Hotspur and Norwich City, will fill the



vital role of sweeper.

A fabulous passer of the ball, an excellent defender, the 32 year old Crook will inject enormous experience into this brand new team.

Arnold stated to Soccer Weekly last night: "At the moment we have a few problems with injuries we sustained in our 10 trial matches played over recent weeks.

"We won nine of them which was pleasing and last Friday night suffered our first loss (1-0) against



Wollongong City.

"I can assure you that it has been a big job building and putting together 22 players. I've been able to mix youth with experience.

"In assembling this brand new squad, I've had total say.

"Everybody at Spirit has signed has been of my very own choice," Arnold confirmed.

Meanwhile Spirit's articulate Chairman, Mr Remo Nogarotto, stated to ABSW: "If the media is prepared to back us, the Spirit is going to have a real go.

"We are here to build a Spirit for so long missing in Australian Soccer.

"We won't allow things to get in our way and we will endeavour to cut it in the market.

"Northern Sydney is a prime Soccer area boasting 99 clubs with over 20,000 players — of which very few of them have seen or watched a National League match.

"We are a professional Club and we believe we can drag Soccer up to the heights it has promised for so long," ended the ambitious Mr Nogarotto.

With the sound backing of Crystal Palace multi-millionaire Chairman Marc Goldberg, Spirit has galvanised vital financial stability to its balance sheet.

Sound and an enthusiastic backroom staff in fulltime administration led by Melissa Down and her assistant, plus heaps of smart marketing, the Spirit is assured to do well.

Subordinate and valuable corporate sponsorships have also been syndicated from Reusch, Goodyear, Pepsi, Gatorade, Volvo, Tooheys, North Shore Furniture, Royal Doulton, HPM, Lotto, Tilecraft, PGH Bricks, Monier Roof Tiles, North Sydney Leagues Club and Strath-Ayr.

The Spirit will lift the curtain this Friday night at 7.30pm for their first crusade in the Ericsson Cup when it takes on Branko Culina's Sydney Olympic at the picturesque North Sydney Oval, now called Spirit Park.

Players Signed: Peter Blazincic, John Perosh, Paul Henderson, Robbie Slater, Nick Purdue, Eddy Bosnar, Ian Crook, Mark Rudan, Luke Casserly, Michael Cunico (above), Kresimir Marusic, Gabriel Mendez, Troy Cranney, Paul Bilokapic, Matthew Langdon, Paul Wearne, James Stubbs-Mills, Phil Moss, Daniel Watkins, Graham Arnold, Clayton Zane, Tony Perinich, Scott Ollerenshaw.

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Australian Preview

PERTH GLORY

WOLLONGONG CITY

Ground: Perth Oval,
Pier Street East Perth
Coach: Bernd Stange
Captain: Gareth Naven
Last Season: 8th
(P26, W10, D1, L10, F35, A40, Pts 36)
Players Lost: Tommy Maras,
Vladimir Beretovac, Craig Naven,
Paul McVittie, Peter Anosike,
Samson Siasia, Scott Halpin,
Anthony Carbone, Simon Harland
(all released)
Players gained: Danny Milosevic
(Prussen Munster-Germany),
John Markovski (Carlton),
Robert Trajkovski (Carlton),
Vasko Trpcovski (Altona Magic),
Jamie Harnwell (Kingsway Olympic),
John Carbone (Floreat Athena)

By Richard Kreider

After finishing eighth last season and seventh in their inaugural season, Perth Glory are fully aware of having to improve on their topsy-turvy home performances if they are to make the play-offs this time around.

Those sentiments are also expressed by the former East German national coach and now Glory boss Bernd Stange, who agrees his side will have to correct this if they are to have any serious aspirations of qualifying.

Glory only won four of their 13 home games last season, which is quite an amazing statistic when you consider the huge support they get at every match.

One of those wins was a 4-1 hiding of Ericsson Cup champions South Melbourne: arguably their best result of the season. Their worst, however, was a 4-3 loss to Newcastle Breakers, a 3-0 defeat by Wollongong and a 1-1 draw with lowly Canberra Cosmos — all of which were at home.



This time around however, the squad contains better depth and a more potent fire power, and this ultimately should result in an improved consistency. The strike force will be Bobby Despotovski (right), Vas Kalogeracos and John Markovski, with others like midfielders Troy Halpin, Ernie Tapai and Michael Garcia all likely to make an impact when on the offensive.

Socceroos Markovski and Robert Trajkovski especially, who both left Carlton for Glory, should feature prominently in the team's fortunes.

Vinko Buljubasic turned down a chance to play in Europe to remain with Glory, and should again play a



Will Gloryman be smiling this year?

major role in the middle-third alongside his non-nonsense skipper Gareth Naven (pictured).

In defence, Olyroo goalkeeper Danny Milosevic is starting to settle in and will be backed up by Anthony Franken who hardly put a foot wrong last season. Kiwi internationals Danny Hay and Gavin Wilkinson who were inspirational in the Oceania Nations Cup, should link up well with wing-backs Trajkovski and Scott Miller.

Last but by no means least former South Melbourne midfielder Con Boutsianis, James Afkos, Paul Strudwick, Vasko Trpcovski, and local youngsters John Carbone and Jamie Harnwell. All are quality performers in their own right and will no doubt receive their call-up sometime during the season. Although Stange is confident of his side performing well, he has expressed some concern over the opposition, of which he has only seen in a small number of videos.

Glory have another ace up their sleeve in development officer Mich d'Avray, the former Ipswich Town star who was recently in control of the South African Olympic team prior to heading across the Indian Ocean.

It is apparent even at this early stage that both d'Avray and Stange have forged a formidable relationship.



With a 100% success rate in their pre-season games, the signs are there that Perth Glory may very well make the Top-Six this time around.

By John Economos

Wollongong City's ambitious coach Nick Theodorakopoulos is aiming to challenge even more strongly for the League championship than he did last season.

Despite Wollongong qualifying for last season's Top Six, their stay was short-lived.

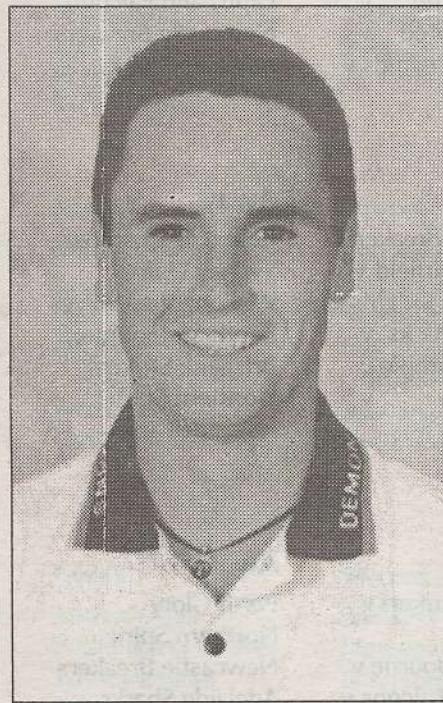
Theodorakopoulos lost much pace and fire-power during the off-season when Northern Spirit, snapped up his mobile striker Tony Perinich.

In recent weeks Theodorakopoulos recoiled rapidly by signing not one, but three new strikers to stock up his arsenal of marksmen.

In rapid succession he snapped up the industrious Michael Brooks from Adelaide City, Saso Petrovski from Parramatta Eagles and Kostas Salapasis who was on loan late last season from Adelaide City.

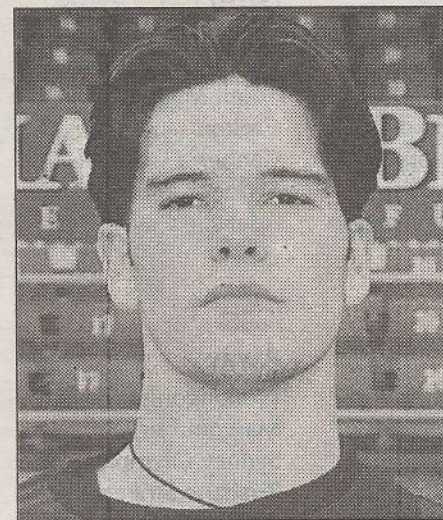
As well, Theodorakopoulos snapped up Damon Langan (below) from Blacktown City to possibly slot in as the Wolves' lateral defender.

With two of his stars recently gaining



international selection in Raul Blanco's Australian squad, (goalscoring defender Alvin Cecolli and the pacey left midfielder Scott Chipperfield), Theodorakopoulos today believes his side is a stronger and more serious challenger for the League championship.

"We are not in the League to make up the numbers," said Theodorakopoulos.



"We did well last season and surprised most people. This season we are determined in going one step further.

"The privatisation of the Club has brought much needed financial stability with sound backing in administration."



Wollongong's captain will again be their tenacious attacking right midfielder, Matt Horsley.

There is a high spirit surrounding the Club which lately has strong but rare feelings of high expectations.

Newly signed striker Saso Petrovski who starred for the Parramatta Eagles in the NSW Super League by scoring 13 goals, exemplifies this high spirit of expectation for success.

Last weekend Saso married his fiancée Karolina, however the newly weds have put aside their honeymoon for the time being to enable the skilled striker the chance of a flying start in the Wollongong team for Sunday's away match at 3pm against Carlton at Optus Oval.

The following week, Round 2, Wollongong City will again be away, this time to the Melbourne Knights. In Round 3 the Wolves have a bye.

This season the newly organised Wollongong City Soccer Club has appointed newly signed striker Michael Brooks as the Club's Media Officer.

Wollongong City as well has installed as their new Marketing Director, the efficient and Juliet Scrine.

Wollongong's first home match won't be till Round 4, against the visiting Adelaide City on Sunday the 1st of November.

Yesterday, (Monday) Wolves conducted their official season launch with a Family Day at Brandon Park where fans were treated to a free barbie and watched their NSL squad train.

Players were readily available to sign autographs from midday with added activities programmed for the kids, including amusements and competitions.

The always very popular 'Wolf' was on hand to give the children a practice run in the always exciting and highly hilarious game of 'Chase The Wolf'

Players Sold: Tony Perinich, Sonny Sevin, Adam Brodbeck, Jason Connolly, Mike Kariamias, Colin Luff.

New Players Signed: Les Pogliacomi (left), Damon Langan, Saso Petrovski, Michael Brooks, Kostas Salapasis.

ERICSSON



FIXTURE LIST - PART 1

ROUND 1

Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
09/10/98	Fri	Northern Spirit v	Sydney Olympic	North Sydney Oval	7.30pm
10/10/98	Sat	Brisbane Strikers v	Marconi Fairfield	Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm
11/10/98	Sun	Carlton v	Wollongong Wolves	Optus Oval	3.00pm
11/10/98	Sun	Adelaide City v	Perth Glory	Hindmarsh Stadium	3.00pm
11/10/98	Sun	S. Melbourne v	Gippsland Falcons	Bob Jane Stadium	6.00pm
11/10/98	Sun	Sydney United v	Newcastle Breakers	Parramatta Stadium	3.00pm
12/10/98	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	Adelaide Sharks	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm

* Bye - Melbourne Knights

ROUND 2

Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
16/10/98	Fri	Newcastle Breakers v	Canberra Cosmos	Breakers Stadium	8.00pm
17/10/98	Sat	Marconi Fairfield v	Sydney United	Marconi Stadium	7.00pm
18/10/98	Sun	Melbourne Knights v	Wollongong Wolves	Knights Stadium	3.00pm
18/10/98	Sun	Adelaide Sharks v	South Melbourne	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.30pm
18/10/98	Sun	Sydney Olympic v	Brisbane Strikers	Belmore Sports Ground	6.00pm
18/10/98	Sun	Perth Glory v	Northern Spirit	Perth Oval	3.00pm
18/10/98	Sun	Carlton v	Adelaide City	Optus Oval	3.00pm

* Bye - Gippsland Falcons

ROUND 3

Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
24/10/98	Sat	Brisbane Strikers v	Perth Glory	Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm
25/10/98	Sun	Carlton v	Northern Spirit	Optus Oval	3.00pm
25/10/98	Sun	South Melbourne v	Newcastle Breakers	Bob Jane Stadium	6.00pm
25/10/98	Sun	Gippsland Falcons v	Adelaide Sharks	Falcons Park	6.00pm
25/10/98	Sun	Sydney United v	Sydney Olympic	Parramatta Stadium	3.00pm
25/10/98	Sun	Adelaide City v	Melbourne Knights	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.00pm
26/10/98	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	Marconi Fairfield	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm

* Bye - Wollongong Wolves

ROUND 4

Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
30/10/98	Fri	Newcastle Breakers v	Gippsland Falcons	Breakers Stadium	8.00pm
30/10/98	Fri	Northern Spirit v	Melbourne Knights	North Sydney Oval	7.30pm
31/10/98	Sat	Marconi Fairfield v	South Melbourne	Marconi Stadium	7.00pm
31/10/98	Sat	Brisbane Strikers v	Carlton	Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm
01/11/98	Sun	Sydney Olympic v	Canberra Cosmos	Belmore Sports Ground	6.00pm
01/11/98	Sun	Perth Glory v	Sydney United	Perth Oval	4.00pm
01/11/98	Sun	Wollongong Wolves v	Adelaide City	Brandon Park	6.30pm

* Bye - Adelaide Sharks

ROUND 5

Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
06/11/98	Fri	Northern Spirit v	Wollongong Wolves	Northern Sydney Oval	7.30pm
07/11/98	Sat	Gippsland Falcons v	Marconi Fairfield	Falcons Park	7.00pm
08/11/98	Sun	South Melbourne v	Sydney Olympic	Bob Jane Stadium	6.00pm
08/11/98	Sun	Melbourne Knights v	Brisbane Strikers	Knights Stadium	3.00pm
08/11/98	Sun	Adelaide Sharks v	Newcastle Breakers	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.30pm
08/11/98	Sun	Sydney United v	Carlton	Parramatta Stadium	5.00pm
09/11/98	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	Perth Glory	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm

* Bye - Adelaide City

ROUND 6

Date	Day	Home	Away
14/11/98	Sat	Marconi Fairfield v	Adelaide S
15/11/98	Sun	Melbourne Knights v	Sydney U
15/11/98	Sun	Sydney Olympic v	Gippsland
15/11/98	Sun	Perth Glory v	South Me
15/11/98	Sun	Carlton v	Canberra
15/11/98	Sun	Wollongong Wolves v	Brisbane S
15/11/98	Sun	Adelaide City v	Northern

* Bye - Newcastle Breakers

ROUND 7

Date	Day	Home	Away
20/11/98	Fri	Newcastle Breakers v	Marconi F
21/11/98	Sat	Brisbane Strikers v	Adelaide C
22/11/98	Sun	South Melbourne v	Carlton
22/11/98	Sun	Gippsland Falcons v	Perth Glo
22/11/98	Sun	Adelaide Sharks v	Sydney O
22/11/98	Sun	Sydney United v	Wollongo
23/11/98	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	Melbourn

* Bye - Northern Spirit

ROUND 8

Date	Day	Home	Away
27/11/98	Fri	Northern Spirit v	Brisbane S
29/11/98	Sun	Melbourne Knights v	South Mel
29/11/98	Sun	Sydney Olympic v	Newcastle
29/11/98	Sun	Perth Glory v	Adelaide S
29/11/98	Sun	Carlton v	Gippsland
29/11/98	Sun	Wollongong Wolves v	Canberra
29/11/98	Sun	Adelaide City v	Sydney U

* Bye - Marconi Fairfield

ROUND 9

Date	Day	Home	Away
04/12/98	Fri	Newcastle Breakers v	Perth Glo
05/12/98	Sat	Marconi Fairfield v	Sydney O
05/12/98	Sat	Gippsland Falcons v	Melbourn
06/12/98	Sun	South Melbourne v	Wollongon
06/12/98	Sun	Adelaide Sharks v	Carlton
06/12/98	Sun	Sydney United v	Northern
07/12/98	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	Adelaide C

* Bye - Brisbane Strikers

ROUND 10

Date	Day	Home	Away
12/12/98	Sat	Brisbane Strikers v	Sydney U
13/12/98	Sun	Melbourne Knights v	Adelaide S
13/12/98	Sun	Perth Glory v	Marconi F
13/12/98	Sun	Wollongong Wolves v	Gippsland
13/12/98	Sun	Adelaide City v	South Mel
13/12/98	Sun	Carlton v	Newcastle
14/12/98	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	Northern

* Bye - Sydney Olympic

ON CUP

1998-99

Fixture list is accurate at time of publication but Soccer Weekly does not accept any responsibility for any subsequent changes. Please check your local TV guides for any late changes as the ABC will cover one weekly game live.

ROUND 11

	Venue	Kick Off	Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
Sharks	Marconi Stadium	7.00pm	18/12/98	Fri	Newcastle Breakers v	Melbourne Knights	Breakers Stadium	8.00pm
United	Knights Stadium	3.00pm	19/12/98	Sat	Marconi Fairfield v	Carlton	Marconi Stadium	7.00pm
Falcons	Belmore Sports Ground	6.00pm	19/12/98	Sat	Gippsland Falcons v	Adelaide City	Falcons Park	7.00pm
Sydney	Perth Oval	4.00pm	20/12/98	Sun	South Melbourne v	Northern Spirit	Bob Jane Stadium	6.00pm
Adelaide	Optus Oval	7.30pm	20/12/98	Sun	Adelaide Sharks v	Wollongong Wolves	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.30pm
Perth	Brandon Park	6.30pm	20/12/98	Sun	Sydney Olympic v	Perth Glory	Belmore Sports Ground	6.00pm
Wolves	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.00pm	21/12/98	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	Brisbane Strikers	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm
Strikers								
Spirit								

ROUND 12

	Venue	Kick Off	Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
Fairfield	Breakers Stadium	8.00pm	27/12/98	Sun	Melbourne Knights v	Marconi Fairfield	Knights Stadium	6.00pm
City	Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm	27/12/98	Sun	Carlton v	Sydney Olympic	Optus Oval	6.00pm
	Bob Jane Stadium	6.00pm	27/12/98	Sun	Wollongong Wolves v	Newcastle Breakers	Brandon Park	6.30pm
	Falcons Park	7.00pm	27/12/98	Sun	Adelaide City v	Adelaide Sharks	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.00pm
	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.30pm	27/12/98	Sun	Northern Spirit v	Gippsland Falcons	North Sydney Oval	7.30pm
	Parramatta Stadium	5.00pm	27/12/98	Sun	Brisbane Strikers v	South Melbourne	Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm
	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm	27/12/98	Sun	Sydney United v	Canberra Cosmos	Parramatta Stadium	5.00pm

ROUND 13

	Venue	Kick Off	Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
Strikers	North Sydney Oval	7.30pm	01/01/99	Fri	Newcastle Breakers v	Adelaide City	Breakers Stadium	8.00pm
Sydney	Knights Stadium	3.00pm	02/01/99	Sat	Marconi Fairfield v	Wollongong Wolves	Marconi Stadium	7.00pm
Adelaide	Belmore Sports Ground	6.00pm	03/01/99	Sun	South Melbourne v	Sydney United	Bob Jane Stadium	6.00pm
Perth	Perth Oval	4.00pm	03/01/99	Sun	Gippsland Falcons v	Brisbane Strikers	Falcons Park	7.00pm
Falcons	Optus Oval	5.00pm	03/01/99	Sun	Adelaide Sharks v	Northern Spirit	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.30pm
Cosmos	Brandon Park	6.30pm	03/01/99	Sun	Perth Glory v	Carlton	Perth Oval	5.00pm
United	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.00pm	03/01/99	Sun	Sydney Olympic v	Melbourne Knights	Belmore Sports Ground	6.00pm

ROUND 14

	Venue	Kick Off	Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
	Breakers Stadium	8.00pm	08/01/99	Fri	Northern Spirit v	Newcastle Breakers	North Sydney Oval	7.30pm
	Marconi Stadium	7.00pm	09/01/99	Sat	Brisbane Strikers v	Adelaide Sharks	Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm
	Falcons Park	6.00pm	10/01/99	Sun	Melbourne Knights v	Perth Glory	Knights Stadium	6.00pm
	Bob Jane Stadium	6.00pm	10/01/99	Sun	Wollongong Wolves v	Sydney Olympic	Brandon Park	6.30pm
	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.30pm	10/01/99	Sun	Adelaide City v	Marconi Fairfield	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.00pm
	Parramatta Stadium	5.00pm	10/01/99	Sun	Sydney United v	Gippsland Falcons	Parramatta Stadium	5.00pm
	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm	11/01/99	Mon	Canberra Cosmos v	South Melbourne	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm

ROUND 15

	Venue	Kick Off	Date	Day	Home	Away	Venue	Kick Off
United	Suncorp Stadium	7.00pm	15/01/99	Fri	Newcastle Breakers v	Brisbane Strikers	Breakers Stadium	8.00pm
Sharks	Knights Stadium	6.00pm	15/01/99	Fri	Northern Spirit v	Marconi Fairfield	North Sydney Oval	7.30pm
Fairfield	Perth Oval	5.00pm	17/01/99	Sun	Carlton v	Melbourne Knights	Optus Oval	6.00pm
Falcons	Brandon Park	6.30pm	17/01/99	Sun	Gippsland Falcons v	Canberra Cosmos	Falcons Park	7.00pm
Sydney	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.00pm	17/01/99	Sun	Adelaide Sharks v	Sydney United	Hindmarsh Stadium	7.30pm
Adelaide	Optus Oval	6.00pm	17/01/99	Sun	Sydney Olympic v	Adelaide City	Belmore Sports Ground	6.00pm
Perth	Bruce Stadium	7.00pm	17/01/99	Sun	Perth Glory v	Wollongong Wolves	Perth Oval	5.00pm

Australian Features

Soccer Weekly: Both of your sides have had a mixed pre-season, how do you think you'll go this season?

Archie Thompson: "I think the Falcons will do a lot better than we did last year. We've got new coach and a young team that's willing to work hard."

Con Blatsis: "We've lost a couple of players but Ange has brought in a few new guys but I don't think that the team line-up won't change that much. Pre-season hasn't been that great for us, results-wise, but we're just taking it slowly. Once the season kicks in, I think we can do as well as we did last season."

Soccer Weekly: Your targets for the season?

A.T.: "To perform at a consistent level and to be up with the leaders in the goalscoring department."

C.B.: "First of all, I've got to get over a few of my injuries. I just want to have a consistent year and I'd like to play every game this season and do well in the Olyroo squad. I also hope to make the Socceroo squad."

Soccer Weekly: Con, can South Melbourne lift the championship trophy again?

C.B.: "I think we can. We've got a strong team this season despite losing a few players. Every one of the players will be trying their hardest to do so."

Soccer Weekly: Archie, last season you had the reputation as something of a 'super-sub', how important is it for you to change that?

A.T.: "It's very important. I'd rather be known as a super player than just a super-sub."

Soccer Weekly: Who are the danger sides?

C.B.: "Northern Spirit will be the team to watch, as well as Sydney Olympic, Marconi and Adelaide City and even Gippsland, who are looking quite sharp. It's going to be a very tight season."

A.T.: "I'd go along with that, there's so many good teams in the league, it's too hard to pick out one team."

Soccer Weekly: What is your opinion of the standard of the Ericsson Cup?

A.T.: "It is improving. Technically, every player has great skills, but I think it's the strategies and tactics and that have to improve, but other than that I think it's pretty good."

C.B.: "A lot of people say that the standard isn't so good in Australia. I think it is, we're all skilful players and some of the coaching is very good. In the Joeys and Young Socceroo and Olympic teams, we get good results against every other country. A lot of people make the mistake of comparing it to other leagues around the world. Tactically, physically and technically, Australian soccer is a very high standard, and it will improve."

Soccer Weekly: Both of you have young coaches, how do they compare to others you have had?

A.T.: "With Frank Arok, some of his ideas were a little old-fashioned. But with Stuart (Munro), he's played at the highest level and he knows what has to be done. He's brought some new ideas to the team and is doing very well."

C.B.: "I can't really pick many differences in the coaches I've had. All my coaches have helped my own game as well as the teams. When Frank Arok was at South Melbourne, he changed the club around, he brought in a lot of young players and then handed it over to Ange (Postecoglou) and now the place has just boomed."

ARCHIE AND CON'S BIG DEBATE!

Soccer Weekly: You both have o/s ambitions. Any time frame for this?

A.T.: "As soon as I can establish myself as a well known player here. Maybe I need a couple of good seasons, but I'd like to get over as soon as possible."

C.B.: "I'm not rushing to get over there. I'd like to play well here and, like Archie said, to establish myself. I've want to make the Olympic team and make sure I'm a regular in that team. Then I'll just take it from there. It's every young soccer players dream to get overseas. If there's an offer there, that's when you go for it, that's the way I think of it, not to rush into it, or it will backfire."

Con Blatsis and Archie Thompson are good friends and Olyroo team-mates, both aspiring to make the final squad for the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. But this week, in round one of the Ericsson Cup, they will be lining up against each other when defending champions South Melbourne host Gippsland Falcons at Bob Jane Stadium. Over lunch, Dwyght Tuffnell asks the hard questions ...

Soccer Weekly: Any particular destination?

A.T.: "Spain, their league would suit my style of play. The skill of some of the players over there, it's unbelievable. I just love the Spanish way of playing. It's great soccer."

C.B.: "I'd love to play in Greece, where my parents are from. But as long as the team is professional and it's a good league, there's a lot of them in the world, you can't be too picky. I've already trialled in England, that was great. The football there is great and the people there were very good to me, I'd love to play there as well."

Soccer Weekly: Other players, such as Tansel Baser, have said that his chances for a spot in the Olyroo squad would be better if he was playing overseas, does this apply to either of you?

A.T.: "Not really. If you're a good player Raul (Olyroo coach, Blanco) would take that into consideration no matter where you are playing."

C.B.: "I think pretty much the same way. There might be a player overseas, playing at a higher level than you are but he might not be better than you."

Soccer Weekly: What's it like to be involved with the Olyroo squad?

C.B.: "When you start off playing soccer, that's where you want to be (national teams). When I was younger I always looked up to these players and think that I'd love to be there. It's a dream come true for me to represent Australia till now. Hopefully I can make it all the way to 2000. It's just a great feeling. I love travelling to different places and playing against other teams."

A.T.: "It's great. To have a good opportunity to play in the Olympics, which is the second major tournament behind the World Cup, is great honour, representing your country at such a high level."

Soccer Weekly: What about the competition for places in the final squad for the 2000 games?

A.T.: "It's going to be tough to make it (to final squad), there are so many good players out there."

C.B.: "We've got players overseas and here who are good players. It is going to be hard but the way I see it is not to think about the other players playing in your position, just to play your best and keep your mind on what you are doing."

Soccer Weekly: Being in the Olyroo squad together, you'd know each others game fairly well, what are each other's strengths?

C.B.: "I like marking Archie some times, but other times I don't. He is very quick on the ball. Some times he'll get the ball and he can turn you or take you on. That's something that defenders generally don't like. They don't like players running at them, they'd prefer just to hold them off, but I'm up to any challenge that Archie will give me."

A.T.: "Con is really strong and solid. He's always on your toes. When he is marking me, I find it really hard to play my game. I'm used to taking on players but when someone is right up close to me, I can't do my stuff. I don't like him!"

Soccer Weekly: How do you see Sunday's game going?

A.T.: "It's hard to say. Hopefully Con and I can each have a good game but we (the Falcons) are confident. Hopefully we can take our pre-season form into the real thing, we'll have to wait and see."

C.B.: "It will be a tough game, it doesn't matter who you're playing in the Ericsson Cup. Especially at a club like South Melbourne where you're constantly put under pressure and teams like Gippsland do come to our ground and want to knock us off. I always go into a game thinking we're going to win. It's going to be a good game."

Soccer Weekly: Give us a prediction

C.B.: "I like making predictions, I'll say we'll win 3-0."

A.T.: "It's going to be a tight one, I'd say it'll be 1-1 or 2-1 our way."

Soccer Weekly: Got any surprises in store for each other?

A.T.: "Yeah, I'm going to sharpen my screws as sharp as they can be."

C.B.: "You can sharpen them as much as you want. I'm just going to out and play my game. He's a good player so I'm just going to try and out-do him any way I can, either that, or I'll just kick him off the park."

CON BLATSIS

Club: South Melbourne
Date of birth: 6/7/77
Place of birth: Melbourne
Marital status: Single, girlfriend Astin
Occupation: Professional soccer player
Nickname: 'Blats'
Position: Centre-back
NSL matches: 65
NSL goals: 4
Previous clubs: Kingston City, Bulleen, VIS, AIS
Honours: 1997-98 Championship, Young Socceroos, Olyroos
Biggest influences: Father
Favourite overseas club: Panathinaikos
Favourite overseas player: Ronald Koeman
Best local player: Paul Trimboli
Most memorable match: 1997-98 Grand Final v Carlton
Best goal seen: Roberto Carlos for Real Madrid v Real Sociedad
Favourite other sports: Golf, tennis
Favourite food: Pasta
Favourite drink: Water
Favourite actor/actress: Tea Leone
Favourite film: Shawshank Redemption
Favourite TV show: South Park
Favourite music: Anything and everything

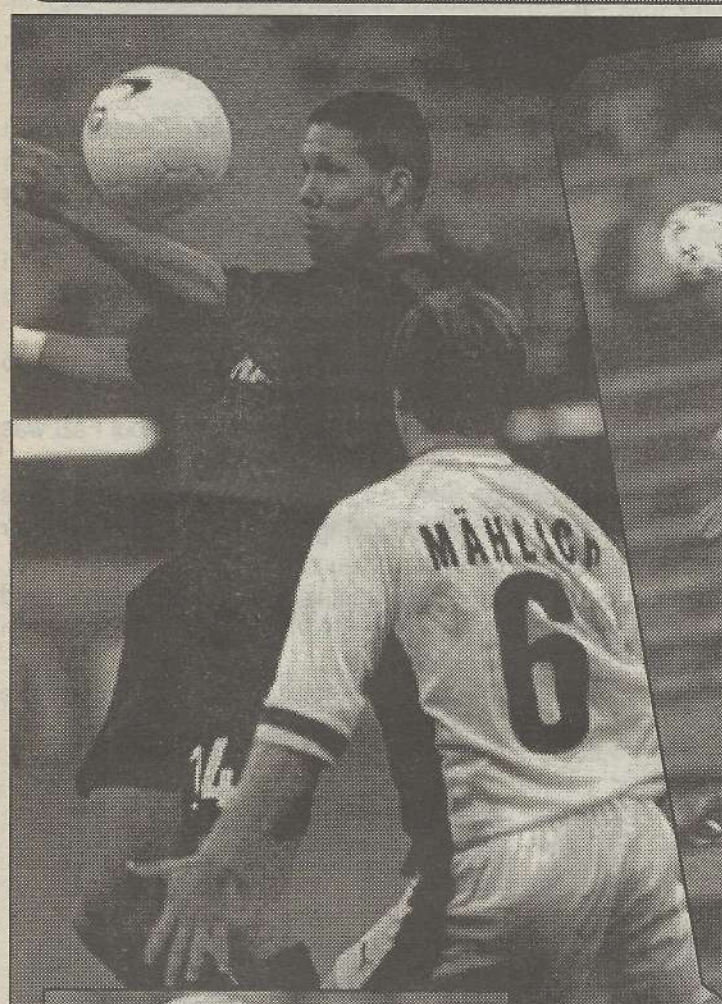


ARCHIE THOMPSON

Club: Gippsland Falcons
Date of birth: 23/10/78
Place of birth: New Zealand
Marital status: Single — girlfriend Emmy
Occupation: Professional soccer Player
Nickname: 'Bundy'
Position: Attacking midfielder
NSL matches: 29
NSL goals: 6
Previous clubs: Twin City Wanderers, City Redtops (both Albury), Bathurst '75, NSW Academy
Honours: Olyroo selection for games against Brazil and New Zealand
Biggest influences: Parents
Favourite overseas club: Real Madrid
Favourite overseas player: Denilson
Best local player: John Markovski
Most memorable match: v Brisbane when scored two goals after coming on as sub
Bets goal seen: Clarence Seedorf for Real Madrid (not sure who against)
Favourite other sports: All sports
Favourite food: Steamed vegetables
Favourite drink: Orange juice
Favourite actor/actress: John Travolta/Cameron Diaz
Favourite film: Pulp Fiction
Favourite TV show: Seinfeld
Favourite music: Anything



SOCCER WEEKLY'S GLOBAL GAME



Compiled by

ASIA

Soccer Weekly

WORLD CUP STAR ON TARGET AGAIN

Masashi Nakayama, the only Japanese goal scorer in the World Cup finals, notched his sixth career hat-trick as Jubilo Iwata trounced Yokohama Flugels 4-0 in the J-League on Saturday.

Nakayama, playing for the first time in three games, right-footed a Dunga pass for a 38th-minute goal. He was brought down in the area before hitting a penalty kick home in the 60th minute.

Nakayama quickly collected a rebound after the keeper saved a shot and struck home in the 86th minute to complete the hat-trick.

"I just tried to concentrate to score one goal at one time," he said.

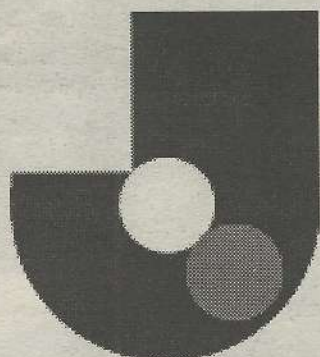
"I passed a big milestone in France so I'm going to do my best, step by step, looking forward to the World Cup finals four years later."

Nakayama has now scored 27 goals this season, 10 more than Shoji Jo, Hiroaki Morishima and Atsushi Yanagisawa.

Defending champions Jubilo have seven wins against two defeats for 21 points, the same as Urawa Red Diamonds, Kashima Antlers and Nagoya Grampus Eight. They trail frontrunners Yokohama Marinos by two points.

Marinos overpowered Consadole Sapporo 2-0, with Norio Omura opening the scoring in the 33rd minute and Shoji Jo adding one more in the 69th, for their eighth win against one defeat.

Shinji Ono, who is being hailed as a future key player for the national team, hit home on a



J.LEAGUE

free kick and controlled the match for the Red Diamonds as they defeated Avispa Fukuoka 2-0.

Brazilian Mazinho scored twice to lead Kashima Antlers to a 3-0 win over Kashiwa Reysol. Grampus Eight let in a goal by Australian Haden Foxe with just one minute left in extra time to go down 1-2 to Sanfrecce Hiroshima.

Kazuyoshi Miura scored for the first time in five months as Verdy Kawasaki defeated JEF United Ichihara 2-0. Shimizu S-Pulse downed Gamba Osaka 4-1 and Cerezo Osaka outplayed Bellmare Hiratsuka 2-1.

Kyoto Purple Sanga posted their second win, beating bottom-placed Vissel Kobe 2-0.

J-LEAGUE STANDINGS

Verdy Kawasaki.....2	JEF United Ichihara.....0
(Fernando 14, Miura 23)	
Sanfrecce Hiroshima.....2	Nagoya Grampus Eight.....1
(Minamoto 15, Foxe 119)	(Fukuda 77)
Shimizu S-Pulse.....4	Gamba Osaka.....1
(Oliva 40, 67, Sawanobori 76-pen, Hasegawa 89)	(Drobnjak 81)
Cerezo Osaka.....2	Bellmare Hiratsuka.....1
(Nishizawa 22, Yokoyama 89)	(Ricard 87)
Yokohama Marinos.....2	Consadole Sapporo.....0
(Komura 33, Jo 69)	
Jubilo Iwata.....4	Yokohama Flugels.....0
(Nakayama 38, 60, 86-pen, Koga 89)	
Kashima Antlers.....3	Kashiwa Reysol.....0
(Mazinho 10, 39, Hasegawa 77)	
Urawa Red Diamonds.....2	Avispa Fukuoka.....0
(Ono 38, Zappella 49)	
Kyoto Purple Sanga.....2	Vissel Kobe.....0
(Edmilson 76, 83)	

TABLE

Yokohama Marinos	9	8	1	22	10	23
Jubilo Iwata	9	7	2	29	12	21
Urawa Red Diamonds	9	7	2	20	5	21
Kashima Antlers	9	7	2	20	9	21
Nagoya Grampus Eight	9	7	2	19	12	19
Shimizu S-Pulse	9	6	3	25	13	17
Sanfrecce Hiroshima	9	6	3	15	8	15
Cerezo Osaka	9	5	4	14	15	15
Kashiwa Reysol	9	5	4	12	12	13
Consadole Sapporo	9	4	5	13	12	12
Gamba Osaka	9	4	5	8	11	10
Bellmare Hiratsuka	9	3	6	12	19	9
Kyoto Purple Sanga	9	3	6	12	16	9
Avispa Fukuoka	9	3	6	4	20	8
Verdy Kawasaki	9	2	7	7	15	6
Yokohama Flugels	9	2	7	10	23	4
JEF United Ichihara	9	1	8	9	23	3
Vissel Kobe	9	1	8	6	22	3

HORNY SINGAPORE CUP MATCH

Steven Tan mesmerised the home fans with a second hat-trick to consolidate Tanjong Pagar United's position at the top of Group B in the Tiger Beer Singapore Cup at Queenstown Stadium, reported the Straits Times.

His three goals, which made him the leading local top scorer with 15, and Nicodeme Boucher's opening strike gave Tanjong Pagar a crushing 4-0 win over Woodlands Wellington.

It was the Jaguars' second big win in four days — they also tore apart Balestier Central 4-1 last Saturday.

Boucher, Tanjong Pagar's lanky striker, gave Woodlands' backline a torrid time, in particular Benjamin Dixon.

Though he put his 1.97-metre height to superb use, it was the sharpness of his mind and feet that bothered Woodlands more.

After Mohamed Nor Zadi's early threat for the Rams of Woodlands, Boucher left his mark in the 19th minute. He merely stuck out his foot to return the ball into goal after goalkeeper E. Maaran had palmed away Aussie Vlado Bozinoski's diagonal shot.

Once Tanjong Pagar sensed blood, it wanted more. The memory of the 1-2 loss at the Rams' homeground in the first round was never far from its mind.

And so Boucher, Tan and Azhar Salleh kept Maaran on his toes whenever they

had a look at goal.

But Tan was not to be denied. His eye for goal and speed carried him behind the defence in the 44th minute and injury time which raised the decibels at the Jaguars' den.

In the process, he exposed Malek Awab and Ishak Saad's lack of movement. At 37, the two Woodlands stalwarts showed evidence of slowing down.

Tan, who carved out his first hat-trick in the S-League, thrust himself into the heat of action once more in the 51st minute. Again he profited from his tireless running.

Said Tanjong Pagar coach Tohari Paijan: "Since I became coach, I've played Steven in the starting 11 in the past four matches of the Singapore Cup. "And he has not disappointed me at all. I believe he is now the leading local top scorer with 15 goals.

"I've thrown Steven's super-sub tag into the dustbin for good."

Tanjong Pagar manager Abol Fazl was equally colourful with his language.

He said: "Before the match, the Rams were saying that they would use their horns on our butts.

"But it looks now that they have used their horns wrongly and kicked their own butts instead."

Woodlands did not show up for the press conference after the match.

REF STRIPPED

China has taken the rare move of stripping one of its football referees of his credentials for making alleged grave errors in domestic matches. Yu Yuancong, a nationally qualified referee, has had his credentials revoked after making serious "technical errors," the Liberation Daily said on Thursday.

It quoted a letter from the China Football Association to the Dalian Wanda Club and the Dalian Football Association, saying that Yu had made several mistaken calls in recent football ties.

"There were serious technical errors that had directly or indirectly affected the outcome of the matches and led to heightened dissatisfaction of some competing teams and fans alike," the letter said.

It also said that some referees clearly were not up to the standards of

professional football and that the league would strive to maintain fair play.

Yu's downfall was linked to a league cup match this week between Dalian Wanda and Liaoning Tianrun which led to bitter protests from the Dalian club.

Dalian Wanda were angered after Yu disallowed a goal and decided not to call a penalty kick.

Dalian was eliminated from the competition after it lost 7-6 on penalty goals after a 1-1 draw in regular play.

The newspaper also quoted a league official criticising Dalian Wanda for "irresponsible public criticism" of the referee following the loss.

Result of the Arab Nations Cup final played Thursday:

Saudi Arabia 3 (Abid Doussari 28, 49, 64) Qatar 1 (Moubarak Mustapha 82)

Compiled by

CROATIA

Soccer Weekly's

John Vrtaric

UEFA Cup

Hajduk went into the second leg of their round one clash with Fiorentina in a confident mood having scored an important away goal in their 2-1 loss in the first leg.

But playing against a very professional Italian defence, the best in the world at protecting a lead, proved too much for them.

Fiorentina's strategy was to defend in numbers and counter attack. Hajduk knew that they were in for a hard game and, in such a situation, they had to put away any chances they created. They did prise open the Fiorentina defence but, unfortunately, were not able to put away their chances.

Hajduk's first chance was as early as the 13th minute. A speculative shot by the man of the match, Leko, reached his team mate, Baturina, instead of the goal but his shot from five minutes went straight to the Fiorentina keeper, Toldo.

Although Hajduk dominated territory and possession through their industrious midfield, Skoko, Leko and Racunica they could not convert this superiority into goals. A number of long range efforts by the three and attacker, Vucko, went close but to no avail.

Leko had an excellent shot in the 27th minute but Toldo was, again, equal to the task, knocking the ball away for a corner.

In the second half Hajduk continued to attack but its best opportunity was in the 70th minute when a cross from Mujda appeared to be handled by Repka. The French referee didn't see it that way and allowed play to continue.

Leko had another chance late in the game with an 18 metre shot that went just wide of the goalpost.

Fiorentina coach, Giovanni Trapattoni, was highly impressed with the opposition and commented that if the game was a boxing match Hajduk would have won clearly on points but it is a soccer game and goals are what count.

"The game showed me, again, that all Hajduk players are tactically and technically gifted, there is no doubt that some will go on to become stars.

"I was particularly impressed with the play of Sablic", Trapattoni added.

Hajduk manager and former goalkeeper, Ivica Katalinic, was similarly impressed with the performance of his players.

He commented that part of their problem was that they lacked height in the penalty area where the taller Fiorentina players had no problems with the crosses coming in from the wings.

Hajduk's best players were Leko, Sablic and, again, Australian international Josip Skoko.

Ante Seric, again, was not part of Hajduk's starting team and it seems that Katalinic regards him as too inexperienced for the European competitions and only plays him in the domestic league.

Line-ups: Hajduk: Gabric, Brajkovic, Biliskov, Sablic, Mujda, Miladin (Lalic 80th), Leko, Skoko, Racunica, (Deranja 65th), Baturina, Vucko.

Fiorentina: Toldo, Heinrich, Repka, Padalino, Falcone, Amoroso, Amor (Bigica 90th) Cois, Tarozzi, Edmundo (Esposito 76th), Batistuta

Crowd: 37,000

Varteks, first round winners, are drawn to meet Holland's Heerenveen in the second round of the European Cup Winners Cup on the 22nd October.

Meanwhile, Croatia Zagreb next match in the Champions Cup is against Portugal champions, Porto, on the 21st October.

Varazdin's Varteks booked itself a place in the second round of the Cup Winners Cup with a narrow 1-0 win over Slovenia's Rudar.

Having drawn 0-0 in the first leg, Varteks proved too strong at home against a very weak opponent. Nevertheless, they put on a far more polished display than in the first game.

Varteks took the initiative from the start of the game and had Rudar on the backfoot immediately. They took the lead in the seventh minute with a good pass from Mumlek to Gergoric who crossed the ball to the waiting Kamberovic who put the ball away in the right hand corner.

The home team had two more chance late in the first half. Gergoric was the provider of both with crosses from the wing. The first cross provided Karic with a header that was well saved by the keeper while the second cross gave Kamberovic a shot that was kicked over the bar.

There were few chances in the second half for either side and, in the end, Varteks had a very comfortable win. The man of the match was Krunoslav Gergoric while, for the away team, goalkeeper, Dabanovic, was the best player.

Line-ups:

Varteks: Solomun, Besek, Madunovic, Balajic, Gergoric, Hrman, Dalic (Kastel 77th), Muzek (Posavec 68th), Mumlek, Kamberovic, Karic (Ivankovic 87th).

Rudar: Dabanovic, Granic, Sulejmanovic, Balagic, Purg (Lavric 58th), Caushilari, Brezic (Sumnik 82nd), Podvinski, Javornik, Pavlovic, Vidojevic

Scorer: Kamberovic (7)

Crowd: 6,000

NATIONAL SQUAD

Croatian coach Miroslav Blazevic announced his squad for the European Championship qualifier against Macedonia on October 14.

The team features three new faces, Jurica Vucko, Danijel Saric and Davor Vugrinec, as well as the return of the France 98 Golden Boot winner, Davor Suker. The squad is: Drazen Ladic (Croatia Zagreb) Marijan Mrmic (Besiktas Istanbul) Zeljko Pavlovic (Lask Linz) Igor Stimac (Derby) Zvonimir

Soldo (Stuttgart) Dario Simic (Croatia Zagreb) Mario Tokic (Croatia Zagreb) Igor Tudor (Juventus Turin) Robert Jarni (Real Madrid) Zvonimir Boban (Milan) Aljosa Asanovic (Panathinaikos) Danijel Saric (Croatia Zagreb) Mario Cvitanovic (Croatia Zagreb) Davor Suker (Real Madrid) Goran Vlaovic (Valencia) Jurica Vucko (Hajduk Split) Davor Vugrinec (Trabzonspor) Silvio Maric (Croatia Zagreb)

Champions' League

Olympiakos Piraeus's reserve strikers Alexis Alexandris and Sinica Gogic scored a goal apiece last Wednesday to earn the Greek team a win over Croatia Zagreb in their Group A European Champions' League match.

Croatia didn't perform to its recent standard and without the injured Robert Prosinecki they had no one to turn to for inspiration.

Olympiakos caused the Croatia defence early problems with long balls over the top with libero, Juric, seemingly playing alongside his twin stoppers, Simic and Tokic.

The match was mistake riddled with both teams appearing nervous. Olympiakos had a couple of early chances with Karapialis' twenty metre shot going just wide and Dordevic missed an opportunity when an off-side trap went wrong.

Alexandris, replacing out-of-form winger Ilija Ivic, was a constant threat in the first half and opened the scoring in the 22nd minute. Gogic received another long from the defence but appeared to take the ball too wide of the goal for a scoring attempt. But instead of shooting he gave a brilliant pass to Alexandris who volleyed the ball into the net from inside the box.

Croatia's only chance in the first half was a twenty metre shot from a free kick by Jelcic that was knocked away by the Olympiakos keeper for a corner.

The second half was similar to the first with Alexandris still providing the most danger to the Croatia defence. In the 58th minute he escaped from his marker, Tokic, but his attempt on goal hit the side netting.

Olympiakos weathered a recovery by the visitors in the second half with three brilliant saves by international goalkeeper Dimitris Eleftheropoulos.

Eleftheropoulos first thwarted Silvio Maric after an excellent through ball to the Croatian attacker. Late in the game, a strike by Mario Cvitanovic was punched out to the lurking Dario Simic but his shot was aimed straight back at the keeper who saved comfortably. The Olympiakos keeper excelled himself for the third time when a Rukavina cross was hammered by the second half substitute, Sokota, but, again, straight at the keeper.

Olympiakos made it 2-0 in the 81st minute when Gogic, who was filling in for suspended striker Peter Oforiaque, passed two defenders and netted with a right foot shot.

Croatia finally did get onto the scoresheet but the goal, by Josip Simic, was cancelled due to an earlier foul.

For Croatia Mark Viduka carried on with his disappointing form for the season, while Silvio Maric, again, was the star amongst an all round discouraging effort by the visiting team. Olympiakos was best served by the goal scorer, Sinisa Gogic, while the other scorer Alexandris provided good support.

The Greek team, who now top the group on goal difference from Ajax with both sides on four points, deserved the victory earned through hard work and determination.

"We took an important step to qualifying for the second stage. We could have scored another goal but then Zagreb had at least two good chances of their own in the second half," the club's Yugoslav coach Dusan Bayevic said.

"We have the quality but not the experience for such games," Zagreb coach Josko Kranjcar said. "Olympiakos played very well tonight and both Alexandris and Gogic created many problems."

Line-ups:

Olympiakos: Eleftheropoulos, Karataidis, Amanatidis (Antzas 77th), Anatolakis, Karapialis (Niniadis 74th), Poursanidis, Mavrogenidis, Giannakopoulos, Dordevic, Gogic, Alexandris (de Souza 90th)

Croatia: Ladic, Juric, D. Simic, Tokic, Rukavina, Jurcic, Jelcic (Sokota 75th), Mujcin (Sabic 46th), Cvitanovic, Viduka (J. Simic 82nd), Maric

Scorers: Alexandris (21), Gogic (81)

Crowd: 60,000

LEAGUE RESULTS

Hrvatski Dragovoljac	0	Slaven Belupo	0
Mladost 127	0	Cibalia	0
Zadarkomerc	0	Rijeka	1
Sibenik	2	Zagreb	2
Osljek	0	Hajduk	1
Croatia	2	Varteks	0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Croatia	8	7	1	0	20	6	22
2. Hajduk	8	5	2	1	19	7	17
3. Rijeka	8	5	1	2	10	8	16
4. Osljek	8	4	2	2	12	7	14
5. Hrvatski Dragovoljac	8	2	5	1	6	4	11
6. Zadarkomerc	8	3	2	3	10	9	11
7. Zagreb	8	2	3	3	10	12	9
8. Slaven Belupo	8	2	2	4	9	14	8
9. Varteks	8	2	2	4	7	12	8
10. Mladost 127	8	1	2	5	5	14	5
11. Sibenik	8	1	2	5	8	19	5
12. Cibalia	8	0	4	4	9	13	4



Ladic

Compiled by

AFRICA

Soccer Weekly

SUPER EAGLES RETURN FOR NATIONS CUP

The group phase of the struggle for African Nations Cup qualification began this weekend with 28 teams chasing 14 berths.

Topping the bill is the clash of Cameroon and Ghana - former holders of the most prized piece of silverware on a continent where football is king.

Ghana have been champions four times and Cameroon twice and are expected to dominate Group 1 at the expense of lightweights Mozambique and Eritrea.

Morocco, who represented Africa at the 1998 World Cup in France with Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia, are favoured to head Group 2.

The Lions should win comfortably at home to Sierra Leone with pony-tailed midfielder Mustapha al-Hadji likely to play a pivotal role.

Unpredictable Togo host poor travellers Guinea in a game that could have a significant bearing on who occupies the second qualifying berth.

Former winners Ivory Coast appear the strongest Group 3 contenders with little to choose between Congo, Mali and Namibia for the other place.

The Ivorians visit Mali with Everton-bound striker Ibrahim Bakayoko in the squad while resurgent Namibia should overcome Congo in Windhoek.

South Africa, champions and runners-up in the previous two editions of the biennial tournament, entertain Angola in Group 4 with a depleted squad.

A European club tie rules out Dutch-based goalkeeper Hans Vonk and midfielder Delron Buckley from German club VfL Bochum has a knee injury.

Bafana Bafana (The Boys) won 1-0 and drew 0-0 in previous Nations Cup clashes with Angola and another close, physical encounter is on the cards.

Gabon, surprise absentees from the last finals, have hired a Brazilian coach, Tonigno, and should beat Mauritius with a few goals to spare.

Nigeria, back after a two-year ban for refusing to defend the title in South Africa for political reasons, visit Burkina Faso in Group 5.

The Burkinabe exceeded expectations to finish fourth this year under French coach Philippe Troussier, whose replacement is compatriot Didier Notheaux.

Zambia face the Democratic Republic of Congo in a clash between the Group 6 giants while home advantage gives Kenya the edge over Madagascar.

Home advantage should also ensure Tunisia of a winning start in Group 7 against Liberia while the clash of Uganda and Algeria appears evenly balanced.

Hosts Zimbabwe and defending champions Egypt automatically qualify for the finals in February 2000.

Nigeria's return to the African Nations Cup on Sunday after a 2-1/2-year ban and are expected to ring the changes after the disappointment of their dramatic World Cup exit in July.

Nigeria was banned from the last two Nations Cup tournaments because it withdrew on the eve of the 1996 finals in a diplomatic tiff with hosts South Africa.

Its group five away match against Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou on Sunday is one of 14 games around the continent at the start of the group qualifying competitions (see right for details).

A total of 28 countries are divided into seven groups with the top two finishers in each group qualifying for the finals in Zimbabwe in 2000. The hosts and Egypt, the holders, have qualified automatically.

Nigeria's stand-in coach Shaibu Amodu has picked a much changed side from those who did World Cup duty in mid-year, where the Super Eagles were unceremoniously beaten 4-1 by Denmark in the second round in Paris.

Amodu has been put in charge while officials attempt to lure Dutchman Thys Libregts to take

over the coaching job. But on Thursday it was still not sure whether he would make the trip with the squad to Ouagadougou.

There is also uncertainty over the availability of Austin Jay Jay Okocha, who plays for Paris St Germain in a European Cup Winners' Cup tie in Israel on Thursday.

The French club has offered to fly the talented midfielder by charter plane from Haifa to Lagos, where the Nigerians have been preparing.

Africa's four other World Cup representatives, who all failed to make it past the first round in France, are also in action.

Cameroon have a tough group one opener against Ghana in Yaounde on Sunday and will be without captain Rigobert Song, still serving a suspension carried over from the World Cup finals.

New Ghana manager Guiseppe Dossena has tried unsuccessfully to lure veteran striker Tony Yeboah out of international retirement for the match.

Yeboah, who plays for Hamburg in the German Bundesliga, told Ghanaian officials last week he did not want to risk injury at this late stage of his career (see story right).

Morocco have a home game against Sierra Leone in group two on Sunday while Tunisia host Liberia in Tunis in group seven.

Tunisia have protested to the Confederation of African Football after Togo pulled out of a friendly last week at the 11th hour.

Tunisian Football Federation president Tarek Mbarek said the decision had upset the team's preparations and that Tunisia would seek compensation.

South Africa, who play Angola in Johannesburg in group four on Saturday, have been hit by the late arrival of their players in camp because of the European Cup commitments of six key players this week.

Midfield anchor John Moeti also pulled out because of injury on Tuesday. He also missed the World Cup in France because of a broken ankle and his absence was one of the key factors behind the side's disappointing showing.

Eritrea make their international debut, just four months after being granted FIFA membership, with a group one match away against Mozambique in Maputo on Sunday.

The other minnows under the spotlight are Burundi, who are home to Senegal in Bujumbura on Sunday.

The tiny east African country are predicted to cause several upsets in the upcoming qualifying campaign.

Another setback has hit Bafana Bafana ahead of their African Cup of Nations qualifier against Angola on Saturday when key midfielder John Moeti was forced to pull out of the squad on Wednesday due to a knee injury.

Moeti did not train with the squad during the week at Mark's Park in Johannesburg, and it was apparent that he was not completely fit.

Team doctor Victor Ramathesele said Moeti was having trouble with the knee since last Thursday and it worsened during the Rothmans Cup quarter-final match between Orlando Pirates and Jomo Cosmos on Sunday.

"He underwent some tests on Tuesday to his left knee and after receiving professional opinion it was diagnosed that he would have to lay off from any football training or activity for the next five days, ruling him out for the match against Angola," Ramathesele said.

Moeti's luck this year has been frightful, as he was also forced to withdraw from the World Cup squad on the eve of departure to the Bafana Bafana's base camp in Europe after he broke a leg in a league match last May.

Thabo Mngomeni of Bush Bucks will replace Moeti.

BAFANA START SLOWLY IN CUP

A Shaun Bartlett goal four minutes from let South Africa escape with a 1-0 win over Angola in their African Nations' Cup group four qualifier in Johannesburg on Saturday.

Bartlett stole in at the back post in the 86th minute to ensure a full haul of the points after a lackluster performance.

The Swiss-based striker, leading scorer in this season's UEFA Cup, headed home a free kick from midfielder Quinton Fortune, one of the few successes of an inexperienced side including five new caps.

The win ended a run of seven games without victory for South Africa, playing their first game since a disappointing showing at the World Cup finals in France.

A defensive Angolan lineup allowed little opportunity for attacking play but when the South African strikers managed to pry an opening their shooting was poor.

Meanwhile, Madagascar rallied to force a 1-1 draw with 10-man Kenya in their African Nations' Cup group six qualifier on Saturday.

Kenyan captain Musa Otieno, who plays in South Africa, opened the scoring with an 11th minute penalty after striker Maurice Sunguti was brought down.

Despite dominating the first half, Kenya failed to build on that lead and Madagascar equalized shortly after Josiah Ougo was sent off for a tackle from behind.

Menahely Ruphin, who plays in the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, drove home a half-volley after 64 minutes when he found himself unmarked in the penalty box.

Both teams scorned chances to win the game in the dying minutes.

Ghana handed Cameroon only its second loss in 28 years of Africa Nations' Cup competition in a 3-1 win in Sunday's qualifier.

Nigeria was also given a fright in its first match back in the competition in four years, as it was held to a 0-0 draw by Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou on Sunday.

There were narrow wins for World Cup finalists South Africa and Tunisia as 13 group qualifiers were played around the continent this weekend. The scheduled match between Burundi and Senegal was postponed until December.

Winger Charles Akunor set Ghana, which has won the Nations' Cup a record four times, on its way to a famous victory over Cameroon in Group A with a 12th-minute strike.

Samuel Johnson and French-based Alex Nyarko added two more as the Indomitable Lions suffered its first home Nations' Cup defeat since losing to Congo, 1-0, in the 1972 finals in Yaounde.

Burkina Faso gained a morale-boosting point against Nigeria in its first competitive match since finishing fourth in the last finals, which it hosted in February.

Nigeria, banned from the last two Nations' Cup competitions, was playing its first match since losing to Denmark in the second round of the World Cup in July, and it had a much-changed lineup after a disappointing exit in France.

German-based striker Adel Sellimi scored in injury time to ensure a 2-1 home win for Tunisia over Liberia on Sunday. Morocco, which was also at the World Cup finals in France, beat Sierra Leone 3-0 at home in Casablanca, a result that pleased their coach, Henri Michel.

"It was important to win this one because we have some very difficult games to come away from home," he said.

Two late goals from Hassan Mubiru saw Uganda to a 2-1 home win over 1990 African champions Algeria in Kampala on Friday. The result continued the north Africans' slide in recent years.

Ibrahim Kone scored for the Ivory Coast in its away win over neighboring Mali in Bamako on Sunday while a slip by Namibian goalkeeper Ronnie Kanalelo allowed Congo to snatch an away win in Group Three.

Brice Mokossi got the winner 10 minutes from time. Eritrea's hopes of a win in its first international match



A Tunisian fan with his snake in his hand.

faded as it lost 3-1 to Mozambique in Maputo on Sunday.

The east African country was playing its first game since being accepted into the world soccer ranks at the FIFA Congress in Paris last June.

The next round of qualifiers will be played in January.

In other news pertaining to Africa, and World soccer governing body FIFA should set up a committee to run the Cameroon federation until its problems are resolved, according to FIFA acting general secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen.

The Cameroon federation FECAFOOT has been in disarray since its president, Vincent Onana, was detained in prison over a World Cup ticket sales scandal in June.

Onana, who denied any wrongdoing when he was arrested in connection with the alleged fraudulent sale in Europe of World Cup tickets, was suspended from his post in August along with FECAFOOT's national management committee.

Zen-Ruffinen, leading a FIFA fact-finding team looking into the crisis in FECAFOOT, told a news conference late on Thursday that he expected a final decision on the way forward by December.

But he stressed that governments had no role to play in the administration of soccer.

Zen-Ruffinen said two days of talks with FECAFOOT officials had helped his three-member mission understand the reasons behind the long-running squabble over who should run the national federation.

"We will report back to FIFA and we expect a decision to be taken by December. Meanwhile we think it is appropriate for FIFA to appoint an interim committee as a conservatory measure to resolving the crisis in FECAFOOT," he said.

He asked the government to put forward names for the interim committee but rejected any suggestion that governments should run soccer in any country. "These powers belong to those concerned with football matters," he said.

The squabbling over who should run FECAFOOT has involved a range of rival administrators and Sports Minister Joseph Owona.

"We have observed there were many problems of management," Zen-Ruffinen said, noting that staff had not been paid for several months.

Ghanaian international striker Tony Yeboah said Saturday he will leave his German club SV Hamburg at the end of the season and return to Ghana.

"I will return to my country at the end of this season," said Yeboah, who retired from the national side after a row over his substitution in a World Cup qualifier against Sierra Leone in April of 1997.

Yeboah joined Hamburg from Leeds United a year ago for 2.6 million dollars and is under contract with the Bundesliga outfit until next summer.

Compiled by

LATINO

Soccer Weekly

CAMPOS BACK IN MEXICO

Mexican goalkeeper Jorge Campos, relegated to a reserve role with the Chicago Fire of Major League Soccer, will be returned to the Mexican League so he can play for UNAM Pumas.

Campos, 31, has been a two-time World Cup starter for Mexico but could not unseat Zach Thornton as goalkeeper for the Fire after being traded to Chicago from the Los Angeles Galaxy for this season.

Thornton went 16-8 with an MLS-best 1.17 goals-against average, allowing 27 goals in 2,076 minutes over 25 games. Campos went 4-3 for Chicago with a 1.89 goals-against average.

"We appreciate and respect every-

thing Jorge has done for Chicago Fire, but we feel Zach has earned a starting role entering the playoffs," Fire coach Bob Bradley said.

"Pumas expressed the desire for Jorge to join their team immediately and Jorge felt this was the best solution."

Campos made his pro debut with Pumas in 1988 and was Mexican League Goalkeeper of the Year four straight seasons from 1990-94.

The return to Pumas might be temporary, although if Campos returns to MLS next season it probably will not be to play a reserve role in Chicago.

"We fully plan to have Jorge playing Major League Soccer next year," said MLS deputy commissioner Sunil Gulati.

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CHILA IN THE THICK OF IT AGAIN

Velez Sarsfield goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert, captain of Paraguay's World Cup team scored two goals, gave away a penalty and was sent off in the Argentine championship. Meanwhile, Colo Colo and Nacional took significant steps towards winning the Chilean and Uruguayan championships after crunch derby matches.

ARGENTINA

Paraguay's World Cup captain, on an afternoon that was eventful even by the standards of his remarkable career, began by converting a penalty to wipe out Gigena's early goal for Union.

He then fired his team in front, scoring from a rebound after seeing another penalty effort saved by Pedro Cavallero.

But things went sour for the volatile Paraguayan when he gave away the penalty from which Union equalized and then got sent off shortly afterwards for handling the ball outside his area.

The point denied Velez a chance to go level on points at the top with Boca Juniors, which maintained a two point lead in the Apertura (Opening) championship after drawing 1-1 with Racing Club.

Boca, which finished with nine men after having Fernando Navas and Colombian Mauricio Serna sent off, led thanks to a Rodolfo Arruabarrena goal until the 81st minute when Claudio Ubeda equalized.

River Plate, winners of three of the last four championships, suffered another defeat, this time at home to Lanus and slumped to 17th place.

The Apertura is the first of two championships played in the Argentine season.

URUGUAY

Nacional is two matches away from ending Penarol's run of titles after a wind-assisted 4-2 win over its archrivals.

Nacional, playing with the wind behind it in the first half, opened up a two-goal lead thanks to goals from Gustavo Varela and former Inter Milan striker Ruben Sosa before 60,000 fans at the Centenario stadium.

Jose Franco reduced the arrears early in the second half, Gianni Giugou resorted Nacional's two-goal advantage in the 66th minute before veteran Pablo Bengoechea again put Penarol back in the hunt.

Nacional's win was sealed with a fourth goal by Honduran striker Milton 'Tyson' Nunes.

Nacional leads the Clausura, the second stage of the championship, on goal difference over unrated Rentistas, which was held to a scoreless stalemate by River Plate. There are two rounds of matches left.

Nacional has already won the first stage (Apertura) and will take the title automatically if it wins the second stage as well. Otherwise, it faces the second stage winners in a playoff.

Penarol has won the championship for the last five years but is now three points adrift of the leaders in third place.

CHILE

Colo Colo is in a commanding position in the Chilean Championship after drawing 1-1 with Universidad de Chile in a controversial Santiago match.

Universidad finished with nine men after having two sent off in a match watched by crowd of 50,000.

Chilean World Cup player Luis Musri was dismissed for a foul in what his team claimed was a harsh decision while Esteban Valencia, another midfielder, was sent off for dissent.

The result kept Colo Colo seven points ahead of third-place Universidad de Chile with eleven matches left to play for each team.

Brazilian Emerson scored for Colo Colo with Pedro Gonzalez replying for Universidad.

Second-place Concepcion, four points behind the leaders, missed an excellent chance to close the gap when it could only muster a 1-1 draw at home to midtable Rangers.

BRAZIL

Two goals by former international Viola, the second a penalty, gave Santos and 2-0 win over Corinthians in a meeting of Brazilian championship's top two.

The win allowed Santos to cut the gap on Corinthians to one point and made Viola, who has returned to Brazil after an unhappy time with Spanish club Valencia, sole top scorer with 13 goals.

Corinthians coach Vanderley Luxemburgo, who is also in charge of the Brazil national side, claimed that one of his players was fouled in the move leading up to the first Santos goal and that the penalty was wrongly awarded.

Santos' win may be largely irrelevant to the outcome of the championship, however, because both sides look certain to finish among the top eight teams, when they will then start from scratch in a knockout competition.

Palmeiras moved into fourth place with a 6-3 win away to Juventude. There are nine rounds of matches left in the first stage.

MEXICO

Cruz Azul, Morelia, Necaxa and Atlas lead the four groups of the Mexican Invierno (Winter) championship at the halfway mark of the qualifying stage.

Cruz Azul stayed on top of group A with a 2-2 draw at home to Atlas, while Guadalajara remained a point behind after a scoring a late goal to draw 1-1 away to Toros Neza.

Hector del Angel, who scored the winner in the previous weekend's win over archrivals America after coming on as substitute, was again the hero.

Morelia came from three goals behind to draw 3-3 with UNAM.

The 18 teams play each other once but are divided into four groups with a complex system deciding the eight-quarter finalists. Two championships are played every year in Mexico.

BOLIVIA

Defending champion Bolivar, which has struggled all year, continued its run of poor play with a humiliating 5-0 defeat at home to Independiente Petrolero, but could still take the title thanks to the intricacies of the competition.

Bolivar was left fifth in its six-team group but if it finish in the top three, it will still qualify for the final round of the Clausura, the second stage of the championship.

The eventual winners of the Clausura will then meet Wilstermann, which won the Apertura, to decide the title.

LOZANO OUT

Valladolid's Colombian international midfielder Harold Lozano will be out of action for at least six weeks because of a cartilage problem. Lozano picked up the injury in a pre-season game but continued to play and aggravated the problem during a Spanish league game against Real Madrid two weeks ago.

He finally underwent surgery on Monday and doctor Pedro Guillen said: "We've repaired the cartilage but it will be three weeks before he can even begin the recovery process."

"He might be back playing in 45 days but we have to be cautious about this."

Lozano, 26, was a member of the Colombian World Cup squad knocked out of the tournament in the opening group stage.

Brazil will find itself in familiar territory after the city of Guadalajara was named the second venue for the Confederations Cup tournament.

It had already been decided that hosts Mexico will be in Group A and will play in Mexico City, while Brazil will be in Group B in Guadalajara, which was selected ahead of Queretaro and Monterrey.

Brazil played in Guadalajara in both the 1970 and 1986 World Cup tournaments and is popular with Mexican fans.

The tournament is to be played from Jan. 8-20 in 1999 and European clubs have said they will refuse to release players for the tournament.

The eight competing teams will be Brazil, Mexico, France, the United States, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bolivia and the winner of the Oceania Nations Cup currently being played in Brisbane, Australia.

Compiled by

GREECE

Soccer Weekly's

A.D. Akrotas

RED RIVER IN EUROPE

IN THE LEAGUE

Panathinaikos beat Ionikos and pursue AEK at the top

Norwegian striker Frank Strandli scored an 87th minute goal last Saturday to give Panathinaikos Athens a 2-1 victory over Ionikos Nikea. The victory, combined with Olympiakos Piraeus' 1-0 shock loss to Paniliakos Pyrgos away, put Panathinaikos in sole possession of second place of the Greek first division league with 12 points after five rounds.

AEK Athens beat OFI 1-0 on the island of Crete on Friday to move to the top of the standings with 13 points also from five games.

Panathinaikos, AEK and Olympiakos played earlier because of their participation in European games tomorrow and Wednesday. Although Panathinaikos was more aggressive from the start of the game, it was Ionikos who came close to open the scoring when a shot by Scottish striker Graig-James Brewster hit Panathinaikos' left upright in the 23rd minute.

Brewster stunned the 7,000 Panathinaikos supporters when he gave his team the lead with a shot from inside the area off a pass from Theodore Pahatouridis in the 36th.

Nikos Lymberopoulos exploited a defensive error to level in the 45th.

Three minutes before the final whistle, Polish striker Igor Sypniewski gave to Strandli in front of Ionikos' goalmouth who netted the winner. It was Strandli's third goal of the season.

In the major shock result of the season, Paniliakos' goalkeeper Socrates Kopsachilis saved a 71st-minute penalty taken by Serbian midfielder Predrag Djordjevic to preserve Paniliakos' 1-0 victory over Olympiakos.

In addition to the penalty, Kopsachilis made three other key saves to shots by Serbian striker Ilija Ivic in the 7th and 21 minutes and by Dimitris Mavrogenidis in the 21st.

The hosts came close to open the scoring in the first minute when Olympiakos' striker Grigoris Georgatos made a line save to a header by Mohammed Sylla.

In the 50th, it was Yiannis Tatsis' turn to make a similar line save to a shot by Olympiakos' Ghanaian striker Peter Oforiade.

Five minutes later, Vangelis Toggias scored the game's only goal off a centre from Peruvian defender Augusto Charun.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Olympiakos' reserve strikers earn 2-0 victory

Olympiakos Piraeus' reserve strikers Alexis Alexandris and Sinica Gogic scored a goal apiece on Wednesday to earn the Greeks victory over Croatia Zagreb in their group A European Champions' League match.

Alexandris, replacing out-of-form winger Ilija Ivic, was a constant threat in the first half and opened the scoring in the 22nd minute with a 12-yard volley after a brilliant pass by Gogic from inside the box.

The Greeks, who now top the group on goal difference from Ajax with both sides on four points, deserved the victory earned through hard work and determination.

Olympiakos weathered a recovery by the visitors in the second half with three brilliant saves by international goalkeeper Dimitris Eleftheropoulos and made it 2-0 in the 81st minute when Gogic passed two defenders and netted with a right foot shot. Gogic was filling in for suspended striker Peter Oforiade.

"We took an important step to qualifying for the second stage. We could have scored another goal but then Zagreb had at least two good chances of their own in the second half," the club's Yugoslav coach Dusan Bayevic said.

Zagreb, lacking the leadership and imagination of their injured playmaker Robert Prosinecki, were pressed into defending until five minutes into the second half when they then began counter-attacking.

It took a save from Eleftheropoulos to deny midfielder Silvio Maric in the 66th minute and the 'keeper was called on again to deny Mario Cvitanovic and Dario Sinic near the end.

"We have the quality but not the experience for such games," Zagreb coach Josko Kranjcar said. "Olympiakos played very well tonight and both Alexandris and Gogic created many problems."

DEFENDERS SHOW THE WAY

Arsenal's imaginative decision to play their first Home Champions League match at Wembley rebounded on them last week.

They kicked off 25 minutes late because of problems with the London underground and now face a six-figure fine from UEFA, sticklers when it comes to time-keeping.

However, such was the interest in this tie — the Greeks brought 10,000 fans with them — that atmosphere at the national stadium was tremendous.

The stadium was also full to capacity and those who had queued so patiently saw Arsenal get off to such a flyer they might have been two goals up inside the first six minutes.

After only two minute the immaculate Dennis Bergkamp curled in a free kick that eluded the Panathinaikos defence. There, running in on the far post was Tony Adams and his diving header flashed inches wide of Josef Wandzik's far post.

Four minutes later the goalkeeper was forced into action, beating out a shot from Nicolas Anelka after the French striker had made a thrilling run with the ball.

Wembley and its unique atmosphere might well have inspired the Greeks, but it was Arsenal who provided most of the thrills.

After 13 minutes, a lovely move featuring Marc Overmars, and Emmanuel Petit ended with Nigel Winterburn getting forward to squeeze a left-footed shot just wide of the upright.

It could have been Highbury, with all the noise, the passion and the support the Gunners received. There was a style and sophistication about Arsenal that suggested they were comfortable in their temporary home.

When you saw how well they handled the situation and how organised and disciplined they were, it was another reminder of just what a good side they had become.

It was clear the Greeks were happy to pull players back behind the ball and defend. At times they had 10 men back in their own half.

There was little need for them to be adventurous so they attempted to stifle Arsenal and squeeze the attacking flair from them.

It meant that Arsenal were committed to throwing men forward to support Anelka and Bergkamp. But without the injured Ray Parlour, they were lacking an attacking support player on the right flank.

They discovered just how dangerous Panathinaikos could be when, in the 28th minute, David Seaman was called on to make his first serious save of the evening.

Andreas Lagonikakis hit a vicious shot from 30 yards that Seaman watched all the way before pushing over the cross bar.

There was no real danger for Gunners, but it demonstrated that the Greeks had the ability to trouble them. Then, when Nikos Liberopoulos hit a volley over the bar it was another warning to Arsenal that they dare not commit themselves totally to attack.

The space Overmars found down the left should have seen Arsenal cash in on his wing play, but his final ball was well defended and Panathinaikos grew in confidence the longer they held out.

But after persistent work first by Bergkamp and then by Patrick Vieira, Remi Garde had a chance on the edge of the area but to Arsenal's dismay, dragged his shot well wide.

For all Arsenal's fine football, the fluency of their build-up play lacked a cutting edge that could have broken the deadlock.

Four minute before half time Overmars had a shot blocked by Wandzik's legs. As the ball ran loose Anelka

should have scored but allowed Erik Mykland and Ioannis Goumas to clear off the line before Gouras managed to hack the ball to safety.

Arsenal knew they had wasted a great chance and a minute later Emmanuel Petit set Bergkamp free but the Dutchman right-footed the ball past the upright.

SEVEN GAMES PRODUCE 40 GOALS

We don't often talk about Cyprian soccer but last weekend's performance was just too exceptional to ignore. NO-ONE could complain about a shortage of goals in the Cyprus first division with seven matches

producing a staggering 40 goals, at an average of just under six per game.

The two highest scoring games produced nine goals, but there their similarity ends.

The first was the 8-1 mauling of Evagoras by Omonia in Paphos, which suggested that the two sides should not be playing in the same division. Not even the most hardcore Omonia fans could have enjoyed such a cruelly, one-sided game.

The second, Alki's thrilling 5-4 victory in the Larnaca derby over Aek, was a rollercoaster of a game that kept fans on the edge of their seats for 90 minutes.

The other highlight of the weekend was Ethnikos' 6-1 drubbing Apollonas, a side with serious title aspirations.

tions that, on Saturday's performance looked like relegation candidates. The last time Apollonas had suffered such a heavy defeat was 24 years ago when they lost by 7-0 to Omonia.

There were disturbances by angry Apollonas fans on the terraces, who jeered and booed their side's players. The timely intervention by police prevented a pitch invasion.

But for excitement, Larnaca was the place to be. Aek had raced to a 2-0 lead through goals by Xiouroupas by the midway point of the first half. Alki were level within 11 minutes thanks to Yiatrou and Babko.

Two goals by Honni after half-time put Alki 4-2 up, but two successive substitutions by Aek helped restore parity. Xiouroupas completed his hat-trick and substitute Eleftheriou levelled the score; and there was still 15 minutes left.

Five minutes before the end, Hadjiantonis nipped in to score the winner for Alki and wrap up the three points. Omonia's victory will be remembered for the fact that their resident goalscorer Rainer Rauffman score only two of the eight goals; he has now scored seven in three games.

Boban Gitanov, Omonia's hard-working supporting striker scored a hat-trick while Kondolefteros also got two. Evagoras, who had lost by 6-1 to Anorthosis on the opening day of the season, are pointless and have conceded 18 goals in three games.

Olympiakos secured their first three points of the season by crushing fellow-promoted side Aris 4-0. Tsiric scored a hat-trick and Avlonitis got the fourth goal.

The other promoted side, Doxa were given a 7-0 thrashing by champions Anorthosis on Friday night.

Apoel's good start to the season continued as they swept aside Salamina in Nicosia 3-0. Rejuvenated striker Yiannos Ioannou was on target again to take his goal tally to five.

Costa and Aristocleous completed the scoring which puts Apoel in third place in the table, on seven points, behind Omonia and Anorthosis on goal difference.

In fourth place, also on seven points, at Paralimni who defeated Ael 1-0 in Limassol thanks to a last-minute goal by Antonis Zembashis.

UEFA CUP

Machlas the destroyer

A fortnight ago, Nikos Machlas scored in the dying minutes to break AEK's heart in giving Vitesse Arnhem a three goal cushion for the return leg. Last weekend he scored twice in the league and this Greek scoring machine kept up the tempo with two first half goals that saw AEK's hopes go up in flames in front of their own supporters.

AEK tried valiantly but by the time Machlas had hit his double middle of the first half (11 and 17 minutes - both headers), the home team was 1-5 down and it was too tall a mountain for them to climb. Or rather, an impossible bridge to cross.

In the end, after the dust had settled, AEK had managed a 3-3 draw at Nikos Goumas with Arnhem Vitesse and they bid farewell to the UEFA cup on a 3-6 aggregate.

The Dutch side, which was ahead 1-3 at the time, was briefly troubled in the 50th minute with the sending off their keeper but managed to hang on for the draw.

So despite Demis Nikolaidis' two fine efforts it was a case of ghosts of defensive blunders past that came back to haunt AEK and so it is left to golden boot Nikos Machlas to "fly" the Greek flag in the next round of the competition.

CUP WINNERS CUP

Panionios make it look easy

Panionios eased into the last 16 of the Cup Winners Cup with an effortless 3-1 away win over Haka of Finland, which followed an equally untroubled 2-0 result from the first leg.

To their credit Haka tried hard but after conceding goals to Fissa (33') and Kouvali (45'), the result had become academic. By the time Sapoutzis added the third after 56 minutes the celebrations had begun and a goal pulled back in the 72nd minute was all the joy Haka managed over the two legs.

With Panionios drawing one of the minnows in the next round in Apollon Limasol of Cyprus, Ronnie Whelan's team is already dreaming of the quarter finals and ... beyond.

DIVISION ONE

Apollon Athens	1	OFI Heraklion	0
Ionikos Piraeus	5	Ethnikos Piraeus	0
AEK Athens	3	Paniliakos Pyrgos	1
Panileofiniakos	2	Veria	0
Ethnikos Astir Athens	0	Xanthi	1
Olympiakos Piraeus	6	Proodeftiki Piraeus	1
PAOK Thessaloniki	2	Iraklis Thessaloniki	1



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SEVEN DAYS IN ITALIAN SOCCER

The head of Italy's Olympic Committee testing laboratory was fired on Thursday as a scandal involving the alleged covering-up of positive doping tests in soccer widened.

Emilio Gasbarrone, secretary of the Federation of Italian Sports Doctors (FMSI) and supervisor of the Olympic Committee's (CONI) Rome laboratory, had been fired, a CONI spokesman said.

Gasbarrone headed the Acqua Acetosa laboratory where the suspect doping tests were carried out. The Rome lab has become the eye of the storm of the biggest doping probe in Italian soccer history.

His sacking came a day after the Corriere della Sera newspaper reported that a random test on the urine of a Udinese player after a match with Roma on Jan. 19, 1997, was positive but the result was covered up. Udinese won 1-0.

Nearly all Italian newspapers reported on Thursday

player, who was not named, tested positive for a banned substance in his urine after the match.

A technician at the CONI sporting laboratory who had carried out the test on the urine of the Udinese player had informed a superior but the superior told the technician to keep his discovery quiet, Corriere reported on Wednesday.

It was not clear if Gasbarrone, the lab supervisor fired on Thursday, was the superior who was told of the positive result and who allegedly ordered the technician to keep it quiet.

The same technician later discovered that a second test tube which contained more of the same Udinese player's urine for a cross check had been tampered with, its seal broken in violation of standard procedures. The test results later disappeared.

Newspapers on Thursday said the Turin investigation was picking up steam with new information supplied to the magistrate by a former worker at the Acqua Acetosa lab.

"Guarinello is at a turning point (in the investigation). Judicial warrants may be issued soon," La Repubblica said.

In Italy, investigating magistrates issue judicial warrants to suspects in criminal investigations when the magistrate feels that there may be enough evidence to press charges.

The warrants are a civil liberty guarantee so the suspect can seek legal advice while an investigation continues.

Guarinello has not made any comment on his investigation since the latest developments surfaced.

But Italy's soccer chiefs were red faced.

"I am really enraged ... I can promise you that those who made a mistake will pay for it," Luciano Nizzola, president of the Italian Soccer Federation, told reporters after Thursday's meeting of the CONI executive.

Italian newspapers have said top soccer authorities knew CONI's procedures for doping tests were suspect but did nothing.

"All of CONI risks being accused," ran a headline in Thursday's Corriere della Sera.

The CONI executive meeting on Thursday morning that decreed Gasbarrone's sacking also officially accepted the resignation earlier this week of Mario Pescante, CONI's embattled president.

Pescante's head was the first to roll over the doping controversy, which dominated the sports press this summer.

Italian critics were once again unimpressed by crack sides Inter Milan and Juventus in their Champions League matches on Wednesday.

Inter Milan were last minute 1-0 home winners against Austrian side Sturm Graz while Juventus were held to a 1-1 away draw by Norwegian team Rosenborg.

"Juventus In Trouble, Inter With Anger" read the headline in Thursday's sports daily Corriere Dello Sport.

Two weeks ago, both sides were heavily criticised after their opening Champions League ties when Inter lost 2-0 away to Real Madrid while Juventus were held 2-2 at home by Galatasaray.

Amidst much negative comment on Thursday, two players were singled out for praise — Inter's French midfielder Youri Djorkaeff, scorer of the last minute

Serie A Round Four

Bologna ... 0	Parma 0
Fiorentina .. 1	Udinese ... 0
Inter 2	Perugia ... 0
Juventus ... 1	Piacenza ... 0
Lazio 2	Cagliari ... 0
Salernitana. 1	Empoli 1
Sampdoria . 1	Roma 1
Venezia ... 0	Milan 2
Vicenza ... 1	Bari 0

winner, and Juventus reserve goalkeeper Michelangelo Rampulla, who saved a penalty.

"Light a candle to Rampulla, Djorkaeff Yes," headlined Gazzetta Dello Sport, going on to comment:

"In the very last moment of the game, Inter climbed back on board the Champions League boat, a boat that was already headed for other shores and other destinies..."

Rome daily La Repubblica was likewise unimpressed by both Italian sides, commenting re Inter:



Batistuta of the high-flying Fiorentina

Round Five

RECOMMENCED WEEKEND OF
17 OCTOBER

BARI V UDINESE

CAGLIARI V MILAN

EMPOLI V BOLOGNA

INTER V LAZIO

PARMA V SALERNITANA

PERUGIA V VENEZIA

PIACENZA V SAMPDORIA

ROMA V FIORENTINA

VICENZA V JUVENTUS

"This Sturm Graz wasn't up to much...yet even against a modest team like this...Inter struggled desperately."

Commentators acknowledged that Italy's teams are still far from fully competitive given the Serie A season started only in mid-September.

Gazzetta Dello Sport further argues that Inter were doubtless penalised by the injury-enforced absence of Brazilian star Ronaldo, adding:

"It may be banal to write this but, with Ronaldo on the pitch last night, the demons would have been seen off long before that final glorious second."

An abnormally high level of red blood cells showed up when 24 Parma players were tested in July, a judicial source said Friday.

This latest disclosure comes at a time when Italian sport is reeling from a series of alleged doping cover-ups and the sacking of Mario Pescante as president of the ruling national Olympic committee (CONI).

The failed tests involve the entire Parma team bar Fabio Cannavaro.

They were unearthed by a police search ordered by Bologna's public prosecutor Giovanni Spinosa, who has been carrying out an investigation into the illegal use of drugs in sport for the last two years.

What a great start by Fiorentina, undefeated in four games with the master coach, and the man many say should be coaching the national team, Trapattoni, plotting the course to a Scudetto success.

And Lazio have finally won a game, they will be relieved given the massive investment in players like Salas and Vieri. Sadly, sadly, it looks like our Paul Okon, while still on the club's payroll, is struggling to make the first-team squad (perhaps a spell back home?). And well-done to Salernitana, their first Serie A point in about 50 years!

Italy will play in Udine on Saturday in their Euro 2000 qualifier and the league recommences the following weekend.



Inter's Moriero kneels with Ventola getting a shoeshine, crazy celebration no. 565

that Turin magistrate Raffaele Guarinello, who has been carrying out an investigation on doping, was now looking into the possibility that more results of tests may have been covered up.

"Tens of matches that smell. The results of at least three players who tested positive may have been covered up," Rome's la Repubblica newspaper said.

Corriere della Sera said on Wednesday that a Udinese



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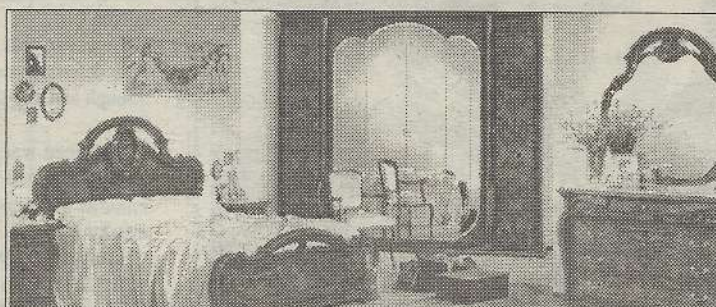


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Mark Fowler

EURO LEAGUE
NEWS

French championship favorite Olympique Marseille beat Toulouse 2-0 at home on Saturday to edge to within a point of leader Girondins Bordeaux, which lost its unbeaten record with a 2-0 defeat at Bastia.

Strikers Florian Maurice and Fabrizio Ravanelli scored for Marseille, the only remaining unbeaten team. Marseille has taken 18 points from its eight games, one fewer than Bordeaux.

Paulo Alves and Pierre-Yves Andre, with a thunderous shot from a short free kick, scored for the Corsicans as Bordeaux failed to find the net for the first time this season.

Olympique Lyon was toppled from second place when it lost for the first time, 2-0 away to a gifted young Nantes side. Speedy winger Olivier Monterrubio scored the second goal, his fourth of the season.

Monaco crashed to its second successive away defeat, 2-1 at Rennes, despite a superb goal from France winger Thierry Henry.

Montpellier may not have the most talented attack, but it has the most effective with 20 goals in eight games after a 5-1 rout of first division-newcomer Lorient, striker Didier Timothee scoring twice.

Marseille struggled to break down a well organized Toulouse defence but finally made the breakthrough two minutes before the interval with a fine move started near the halfway line by Ravanelli.

The Italian, with his back to goal, flicked the ball into the path of midfielder Peter Luccin who fed Robert Pires.

He found France teammate Christophe Dugary on the right, and the striker managed to hit a low cross before being tumbled to the ground by Toulouse goalkeeper Teddy Richert.

Defender Jose Manuel Galdames failed to control the ball, and the unmarked Maurice shot home.

Ravanelli turned well under pressure to score in the 86th minute and put the result beyond reasonable doubt after Maurice fed Eric Roy from the left and the midfielder found the Italian with a neat flick into the box.

Their coach said: "We're unbeaten, and that's something to be proud of, but we were a bit laborious at times. As long as you don't get the right break you're not safe from an equalizer," he said of Marseille's failure until four minutes from time to kill off the match.

"It's early to talk of the championship but it's true we're showing more solidity and cohesion," he said.

The win was Marseille's third in succession in nine days. After beating Bastia 2-0 away, it crushed Sigma Olomouc 4-0 at home in the second leg of its UEFA Cup first round tie on Tuesday. Marseille went through 6-2 on aggregate.

Lokeren regained top slot in the Belgian first division on Saturday, when it beat Sint-Truiden 2-1 and leaders Westerlo went down 2-0 at Standard Liege.

Champions Club Brugge cruised to a 4-1 win at lowly Ostend to go second on 19 points, one behind Lokeren and one in front of Westerlo.

Lokeren made heavy weather of its mid-table visitors, going behind to a Peter Voets strike just before the break. But a brace from Czech midfielder Roman Vranek midway through the second half bagged the points for Lokeren.

The champions also had to come from behind, but did so in style. Kris Windels put Ostend ahead but first half substitutes Nzelo Lembi and Nordin Jbari helped turn the tables with goals either side of halftime. Two late goals sealed Brugge's win.

Westerlo went behind to a first-half penalty when Dirk Thoelen brought down Ivica Mornar in the area and was shown the red card.

Stijn Haeldermans slotted home the spot-kick and, despite a constant barrage, Westerlo could not find the net.

Dimitri De Conde wrapped it up for Liege on 68 minutes, five minutes before the home side's Josko Bilic was sent off. Liege are fifth with 15 points.



Euro action.... Serie A's Cagliari v Sampdoria.

CHAMPIONS
LEAGUE IN BRIEF

A last-minute goal from veteran Romanian international Gheorghe Hagi gave Turkish champions Galatasaray a 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao in their European Champions' League Group B match.

Hagi's curving left-footed shot from the edge of the penalty area put the Turks on top of the group with four points from their opening two games. They are two points ahead of second-placed Juventus.

The Turks went ahead in the 15th minute when Bilbao keeper Imanol Etxeberria knocked a Hagi freekick into the path of Okan Buruk, who drove it home.

But the Basques struck back just a minute later when Ismael Urzaiz trapped a long pass on his chest, turned and swept it past Galatasaray's Brazilian keeper Claudio Taffarel. Galatasaray had most of the play but rarely looked dangerous.

The Turks, slow and steady in build-up, struggled to create chances close to goal. They sent in a few hopeful long range shots but never troubled Etxeberria.

At the other end, Galatasaray's defence was weakened by the substitution of Romanian Iulian Filipescu with an injury early on.

Fast, probing runs from the Basques often stretched the Turkish back line and Urzaiz should have scored a second goal just after the break, but knocked the ball wide of the post.

Galatasaray coach Fatih Terim acknowledged the weaknesses his team displayed.

"Maybe we didn't create a lot of chances or press hard, but we played an intelligent, controlled and economic game," he said.

"It means we're two points ahead and we have taken a careful step towards winning this group," said Terim.

Another late goal, this time a Jari Litmanen penalty four minutes from time gave Ajax Amsterdam a 2-1 win over FC Porto, their first win in this season's Champions' League.

Litmanen's penalty followed a clumsy barge by Porto's captain Jorge Costa on Ajax's Gerald Sibon as a cross came over in a game that looked to be drifting towards a draw.

The goal was Litmanen's 24th for Ajax in Europe, taking him past Johan Cruyff's club record.

The result put Ajax level with Olympiakos Piraeus on four points at the top of Group A. The Greek side, who beat Croatia Zagreb 2-0, top the table on goal difference. Porto and Zagreb have one point each.

The Dutch side had struggled to break down a compact Porto defence throughout a dull first half.

Porto's Mario Jardel probably had the best chance when he was left unmarked in front of the Ajax goal. However, his poor header bounced against the bar after hitting the ground.

In the second half, Ajax's attack was more inventive and Porto's back four looked uncertain. The opening goal came from a long-range, almost speculative, drive from Pole Andrzej Rudy in the 57th minute.

However, just as Ajax looked set to dominate, their defence opened up for Zlatko Zahovic to push through and slip the ball past Ajax's Edwin van der Sar.

Litmanen was clear in the 75th minute but his flick was turned wide. He had to wait another 11 minutes to atone with the penalty that sealed the match for Ajax.

Litmanen's strike was important for under-fire Ajax boss Morten Olsen after some lacklustre performances from the Dutch champions.

"You could see the confidence was back and we played a good game," said Olsen.

The coach of Portuguese double winners Porto put a brave face on his side's defeat.

"It could have been better. We're not going to make a drama of it. We've still got games to play

and it can still turn around," said Fernando Santos.

A goal in each half by Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson gave Barcelona a comfortable 2-0 win over Denmark's Brondby in a European Champions' League Group D match.

The result left the Spanish side top of the group with four points from two matches, ahead of Brondby on three.

Anderson's first goal came from a defensive error by Brondby's Brian Jensen three minutes before halftime.

Jensen was searching in his own penalty area for someone to cross the ball to but instead passed it straight to Anderson, who made no mistake from the edge of the box.

Anderson then used his head for Barcelona's second strike five minutes from time after several missed chances.

His compatriot Rivaldo had a long range effort parried by Brondby goalkeeper Mogens Krogh, leaving Anderson to dive for an opportunistic goal.

"It was hard to overcome Brondby even though we had most of the possession," Anderson said.

"They beat Bayern Munich and we knew that they were going to be tough — they defended well," he added. Brondby beat Bayern 2-1 in their opening Champions' League game.

However Anderson, despite his exertions, modestly described his own efforts as, "Nothing unusual. I'm not particularly tired, it was just like any other game."

The two goal margin was not a fair reflection of the Catalan club's dominance. The figures showed Barcelona had 10 strikes on goal, to Brondby's two, and 62 per cent of the possession.

However some poor finishing, combined with weak passing by Rivaldo out wide on the left, meant Brondby escaped lightly.

Anderson's two goals allowed Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal to relax after injury concerns left him with just 15 fit and available first team squad members before the match.

The Brazilian has taken on the task of main European goal-getter in the absence of Patrick Kluivert.

The Dutchman has scored three times in as many Spanish league matches for his new club but is ineligible to play in Europe until December.

The form of Brazilian Giovanni will cause more concern for van Gaal after another indifferent outing. The international was taken off at half time against Brondby and replaced by 18-year-old local Xavi Hernandez.

Hernandez, a product of Barcelona's youth system, was called up prior to the match from the club's reserves and started his first game in the Camp Nou stadium for the senior team, performing creditably in his 45 minutes on the pitch.

Striker Tony Vairelles gave RC Lens a precious 1-1 draw against Dynamo Kiev in their European Champions' League Group E match.

Dynamo, who lost their opening game 2-1 to Panathinaikos after being ahead 1-0, made a similar mistake this time, conceding an equaliser one minute after scoring through Andriy Shevchenko.

They are now bottom of the group with one point. Lens have two points. Arsenal lead with four points after beating Panathinaikos 2-1.

Shevchenko had the best chance to put his side in front in the 27th minute but he missed from close range after a nice pass from fellow striker Serhiy Rebrov.

But Kiev's top scorer made amends in the second half when he scored with a header off a corner kick in the 61st minute.

Dynamo's celebrations were cut short when Vairelles equalised just 60 seconds later.

Lens, the league newcomers, did not let the 50,000 fans in Kiev derail their game plan and they

held on for the draw despite desperate pressure by the hosts in the final minutes.

"We are still learning in the Champions' League but I'm definitely pleased with the result tonight," said French coach Daniel Leclercq.

When asked to compare Dynamo and Arsenal, the two teams Lens played, Leclercq said: "I'd take the English defence and Kiev attack." Arsenal drew 1-1 in Lens in the opening round.

The Ukrainians, tipped as group favorites by Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger just two days ago, will be hard pressed to retain that status after two disappointing results.

"We have put ourselves in a very difficult position but nevertheless, we have not lost hope to get through from our group," said Kiev's assistant coach Alexei Mikhailichenko.

Benfica extended PSV Eindhoven's miserable run beating them 2-1 at home in a pulsating European Champions League Group F clash.

The hard-running Portuguese again painfully exposed the defensive weaknesses, so evident in PSV's recent string of poor performances in the Dutch league.

After a lively first half in which both sides squandered a number of chances, Benfica took the lead in the 46th minute with an opportunist effort by striker Nuno Gomes.

Gomes, who had a goal disallowed in the first half when he was judged to have fouled his marker, lobbed a delicate chip over PSV goalkeeper Ronald Waterreus.

With the 50,000-strong crowd still celebrating, the former European champions had a chance to go further ahead when Waterreus brought down English midfielder Mark Pembroke after another piece of hesitant defending by the Dutch.

But Gomes, the club's top scorer this season, wasted the penalty with a weak right-foot shot that Waterreus gratefully saved.

Former England manager Bobby Robson, back in charge of PSV for just this season, sent on speedy winger Dennis Rommedahl and Luc Nilis in an attempt to give his tiring attack more pace.

The move appeared to work when Rommedahl collected a long clearance and, with just two touches of the ball, beat Benfica goalkeeper Michel Preud'Homme from the tightest of angles after 70 minutes.

The winger could have put the Dutch into the lead immediately afterwards but his shot from the edge of the area went just wide.

But the Dutch hopes of a second European win were dashed in the 77th minute when Benfica captain Joao Pinto broke into the box on the right, checked and sent in a curling left-foot shot wide of Waterreus.

Both PSV and Benfica have now won one and lost one in Group F, which is lead by Kaiserslautern of Germany who drew 0-0 away to HJK Helsinki.

"It could have gone either way. It was real end-to-end stuff," said a disappointed Robson after the game.

However, he admitted that once again it was PSV's leaky defence that had been its undoing. "We lost the ball in the final part of the field unnecessarily," he said.

Benfica's Scottish coach Graeme Souness, who has come in for some hard criticism from fans for his team selection in recent games, agreed it had been a tough game.

"It was difficult, but then all Champions' League games are," he said.

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Mark Fowler

REFS SHOW CHARITY

Spanish first and Second Division referees and referees' assistants decided on Wednesday to donate their entire wages from one weekend's work to help one of their stricken colleagues.

Carlos Sanz, who last season was a Spanish first division linesman, recently contracted hepatitis C and requires an urgent liver transplant.

Sanz will benefit to the tune of 9,110,400 pesetas (\$60,055) from the generosity of his fellow officials.

The project is the brainchild of FIFA international referee Arturo Dauden Ibanez and his first division counterpart Jose Ignacio Bueno Grimal.

FIFA said on Wednesday it had asked the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) to state who is charge of the national game before two European championship qualifying matches next month.

The FIFA request was made after reports the

government had revoked the BFU's licence.

Bulgaria are due to play England at Wembley on Oct. 10, and Sweden at home in Bourgas four days later.

The Bulgarian state committee of youth, physical education and sports, the equivalent of a sports ministry, said earlier this month it had revoked the BFU's licence and handed control of soccer to the Professional Football League.

However, the BFU is the only body recognised by FIFA to run the sport in Bulgaria.

"We do not think the match against England is not going to take place," said a FIFA spokesman on Wednesday. "But we are waiting for a reaction from them to know what the situation is."

"It may be that any suspension could be coming into effect only after the match."

The BFU was accused by the government of failing to take action in a doping case prior to the World Cup finals.

PASCOLO RETURNS FOR SWISS

Swiss coach Gilbert Gress recalled veteran goalkeeper Marco Pascolo to his squad for next month's Euro 2000 qualifiers against Italy and Denmark. The Swiss, who failed to reach the World Cup finals in France, open up a new campaign under Gress against Italy in Udine on October 10. They then host Denmark four days later in Zurich.

Once a mainstay of the Swiss squad and capped 43 times, Pascolo has not appeared in the national shirt since a 1-0 loss to Norway in November 1996.

Grasshoppers striker Kubilay Tuerkylmaz was once again overlooked by Gress. Unable to resolve differences with the coach, Tuerkylmaz has not played for his country since Gress took over coaching from Rolf Fringer last March.

Olympique Lyon striker Marco Grassi will attempt to pick up some of the scoring slack.

Grassi was a last minute addition to the squad, forcing Gress's hand after being named player of the match in Lyon's UEFA Cup win over Blackburn Rovers on Tuesday (see pic on p.31).

Squad:

Goalkeepers: Andreas Hilfiker (Nuremberg), Marco Pascolo (FC Zurich)

Defenders: Bernd Haas (Grasshoppers), Stephane Henchoz (Blackburn Rovers), Regis Rotenbuehler (Neuchatel Xamax), Johann Vogel (Grasshoppers), Ramon Vega (Tottenham), Stefan Wolf (Servette), Murat Yakin (Fenerbahce)

Midfielders: Fabio Celestini (Lausanne Sports), Francesco Di Jorio (FC Zurich), Sebastien Fournier (Servette), Johann Lonfat (Servette), Ciriaco Sforza (Kaiserslautern), Raphael Wicky (Werder Bremen), Patrick Mueller (Servette)

Strikers: Stephane Chapuisat (Borussia Dortmund), Frdric Chassot (FC Zurich) Marco Grassi (Olympique Lyon), David Sesa (Lecce) Fournier is suspended for the Italy match.

World champions France named the following squad for their Euro 2000 group four qualifiers against Russia in Moscow on October 10 and against Andorra at the Stade de France on October 14.

Goalkeepers: Fabien Barthez (Monaco), Lionel Charbonnier (Glasgow Rangers)

Defenders: Laurent Blanc (Olympique Marseille), Vincent Candela (AS Roma), Marcel Desailly, Franck Leboeuf (both Chelsea), Bixente Lizarazu (Bayern Munich), Lilian Thuram (Parma)

Midfielders: Alain Boghossian (Parma), Didier Deschamps, Zinedine Zidane (both Juventus), Youri Djorkaeff (Inter Milan), Emmanuel Petit, Patrick Vieira (both Arsenal)

Forwards: Nicolas Anelka (Arsenal), Christophe Dugarry, Robert Pires (both Marseille), David Trezeguet (Monaco), Tony Vairelles (RC Lens).

See next page for more Euro 2000 news and squad.

KLUIVERT AGAIN

Patrick Kluivert's fourth goal in four games helped put Barcelona's title challenge back on track on Saturday in a hard-fought 3-1 victory over Valencia in the Spanish League.

Louis van Gaal's star-packed side looked sluggish in the first half as Valencia took a deserved lead. Argentine striker Claudio Lopez marking his return to league action with a stunning headed goal.

But the Spanish champions came back strongly in the second half, goals from Kluivert and Brazilian pair Rivaldo and Sonny Anderson securing a victory that takes them to within a point of leaders Real Madrid, who face Real Betis on Sunday.

Barcelona, like Madrid still unbeaten, has nine points in five games and lies behind Real Zaragoza on goal difference.

Valencia was well worth its halftime advantage as they harried the visitors at every turn, denying space to the dangerous Barcelona forward line.

Their goal came courtesy of a sloppy piece of defending from Michael Reiziger, who failed to react to a hopeful cross from the left and allowed Lopez to power a header past Ruud Hesp from the edge of the penalty area.

It was a sweet moment for Lopez, who was

making his first league appearance of the season after being suspended for five games at the end of last term following an attack on a Sporting Gijon player.

Lopez might have had a hat-trick but for some goalkeeping heroics from Hesp, who twice denied the Argentine when he was through on goal.

Barcelona took full advantage of Hesp's fine display as they turned on the style in the second half.

Kluivert got them back into the game after 55 minutes, blasting home from close range after Abelardo Fernandez had headed against the bar.

That made it four goals in as many games for the Dutch international who capped a fine display by setting up Rivaldo for Barcelona's second.

Rivaldo latched on to Kluivert's measured pass through the middle and rounded keeper Santiago Canizres to notch his first goal of the season.

Barcelona wrapped up the points thanks to an injury-time strike from substitute Anderson, who turned the ball home after Boudewijn Zenden's cross from the left had eluded the Valencia keeper.

OLD GUARD BACK

New Bulgarian coach Dimitar Dimitrov said on Saturday he would rely on the old guard headed by striker Hristo Stoichkov for European championship qualifiers against England and Sweden.

Dimitrov, who had vowed to continue his predecessor's policy of rejuvenating the team, admitted that the prospect of facing England had stopped him making more experiments.

Bulgaria play England at Wembley on October 10 and meet Sweden in Bulgaria four days later.

Dimitrov said of the England match: "The name of our opponents made me very pragmatic in forming the squad."

The 32-year-old Stoichkov, who joined Japanese club Kashiwa Reysol after being sacked by Barcelona in March, captained the Bulgarian side in their opening European championship qualifier against Poland last month.

Bulgaria lost 3-0 at home and coach Hristo Bonev stepped down after the defeat. Dimitrov has called up three more stalwarts who helped Bulgaria to earn fourth place at the 1994 World Cup.

They are Ivailo Yordanov from Sporting Lisbon, Zlatko Yanko from Turkey's Adanaspor and Daniel Borimirov from TSV 1860 Munich.

"Their experience will help other players in the team," Dimitrov said.

Dimitrov also summoned Celta Vigo striker Lyuboslav Penev, who was left out of the side by Bonev.

Among the 11 foreign-based players in Dimitrov's 20-man squad other new faces are Bursaspor midfielder Kostadin Vidolov, who said two years ago he would not play for the national team, and Borussia Moenchengladbach defender Vladimir Ivanov.

Squad:

Goalkeepers: Zdravko Zdravkov (Istanbulspor, Turkey), Dimitar Ivankov (Levski Sofia)

Defenders: Radostin Kishishev (Litex Lovech), Zlatimir Zagorcic (Litex Lovech), Ivailo Petkov (Istanbulspor, Turkey), Vladimir Ivanov (Borussia Moenchengladbach, Germany), Valentin Naidenov (CSKA Sofia), Ivailo Yordanov (Sporting Lisbon)

Midfielders/Forwards: Kostadin Vidolov (Bursaspor, Turkey), Ilian Iliev (AEK, Greece), Ilija Gruev (Neftochimik Bourgas), Mitko Trendafilov (Neftochimik Bourgas), Milen Petkov (CSKA Sofia), Danirel Borimirov (TSV 1860 Munich), Zlatko Yanko (Adanaspor, Turkey), Hristo Stoichkov (Kashiwa Reysol, Japan), Georgi Ivanov (Levski Sofia), Georgi Bachev (Slavia Sofia), Lyuboslav Penev (Celta Vigo), Marian Hristov (Kaiserslautern).



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Compiled by

EUROPE

Soccer Weekly's

Mark Fowler

EURO 2000 UPDATES AND TABLES

GROUP ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Belarus	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Denmark	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Wales	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Switzerland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Italy vs Switzerland,
Denmark vs Wales

GROUP TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Latvia	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Georgia	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Greece	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Slovenia	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Albania	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Norway	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Albania vs Greece,
Slovenia vs Norway, Latvia vs Georgia

GROUP THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkey	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Finland	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Moldova	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Northern Ireland	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Germany	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Turkey vs Germany,
Northern Ireland vs Finland

GROUP FOUR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Armenia	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Ukraine	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
France	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Iceland	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Russia	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Andorra	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Andorra vs Ukraine,
Russia vs France, Armenia vs Iceland

GROUP FIVE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Poland	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Sweden	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
England	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Bulgaria	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Poland v Luxembourg,
England v Bulgaria



GROUP SIX

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cyprus	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Austria	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Israel	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Spain	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
San Marino	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Cyprus vs Austria, San
Marino vs Israel

GROUP SEVEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Romania	1	1	0	0	7	0	3
Slovakia	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Portugal	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Liechtenstein	1	0	0	1	0	7	0
Hungary	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Portugal vs Romania,
Liechtenstein vs Slovakia, Azerbaijan vs Hungary

GROUP EIGHT

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Macedonia	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
Ireland	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Croatia	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Malta	1	0	0	1	0	4	0
Yugoslavia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Malta vs Croatia,
Yugoslavia vs Ireland

GROUP NINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Estonia	2	1	1	0	6	1	4
Bosnia	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Czech Republic	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Lithuania	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Scotland	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Faroe Islands	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

Next matches: Oct 10 - Bosnia vs Czech Republic,
Scotland vs Estonia, Lithuania vs Faroe Islands

SQUAD NEWS

Eintracht Frankfurt midfielder Istvan Pisont has returned to Hungary's national team after a four-year absence.

Hungary coach Bertalan Bicskei included Pisont in his 18-man squad for forthcoming European championship qualifiers with Azerbaijan and Romania.

The former Kispest-Honved playmaker, capped 20 times, last appeared for Hungary against Poland in May 1994.

Pisont moved to German club Eintracht Frankfurt this summer from Israeli champion Beitar Jerusalem and has impressed Bicskei with his performances in the Bundesliga.

"I had good reports on him from my scouts in Germany and I flew out to see him play recently," Bicskei told Reuters.

"I was impressed with his performance, he was constantly involved in the game and looked in good form."

Pisont is one of five players in the Hungary squad who play in the Bundesliga.

Hungary lost its opening group seven game 3-1 to Portugal. They play Azerbaijan in Baku on Oct. 10 and entertain Romania in Budapest four days later.

Squad:
Goalkeepers: Gabor Kiraly (Hertha Berlin), Gabor Babos (MTK Budapest)

Defenders: Gyorgy Korsos (Gyor ETO), Pal Lakos (Gyor ETO), Csaba Feher (Ujpest), Janos Hrutka (Kaiserslautern), Janos Matyus (Ferencváros), Tamas Szekeres (MTK Budapest)

Midfielders: Bela Illes (MTK Budapest), Gabor Halmai (MTK Budapest), Tamas Peto (Ujpest), Pal Dardai (Hertha Berlin), Istvan Pisont (Eintracht Frankfurt), Krisztian Lisztes (VfB Stuttgart)

Forwards: Tibor Dombi (Debrecen), Ferenc Horvath (Genk), Istvan Hamar (Beitar Jerusalem), Norbert Toth (Ujpest).

Slovakian squad for Euro 2000 Group 7 qualifiers against Liechtenstein in Vaduz on October 10 and Portugal on October 14:

Squad:
Goalkeepers: Alexander Vencel (Strasbourg), Miroslav Koenig (Slovak Bratislava)

Defenders: Robert Tomaschek (Slovak Bratislava), Marek Spilar (Kosice), Dusan Tittel (Spartak Trnava), Miroslav Karhan (Spartak Trnava), Vladimir Kinder (Middlesbrough)

Midfielders: Igor Balis (Spartak Trnava), Marek Ujlaky (Spartak Trnava), Stanislav Varga (Slovak Bratislava), Ivan Kozak (Kosice), Miroslav Sovic (Kosice), Szilard Nemeth (Kosice), Peter Dubovsky (Oviedo), Lubomir Moravcik (Duisburg)

Forwards: Milan Timko (Slovak Bratislava), Tibor Jancula (Slovak Bratislava), Jozef Majoros (Slovak Bratislava), Martin Fabus (Trencin)

Chelsea defender Albert Ferrer has won a recall to the Spanish team for an Oct. 14 European championship qualifier against Israel.

Ferrer has been out of the international picture since his move to England from Barcelona over the summer.

But improved performances for the English premier league club have persuaded new coach Jose Antonio Camacho to give the hard-working right back another chance.

Also recalled to the 18-man squad on Friday was Athletic Bilbao midfielder Ismael Urzaiz.

The only new face is striker Marcos Vales, who has been rewarded for his incisive performances for Real Zaragoza.

Atletico Madrid pair Jordi Lardin and Carlos Aguilera, who figured in last month's 1-0 win over Russia in a friendly, have been omitted.

Camacho has also decided against taking a chance on Real Madrid striker Fernando Morientes, who has missed his side's last two games because of flu.

Squad

Goalkeepers: Santiago Canizares (Valencia), Toni Jimenez (Espanyol)

Defenders: Rafael Alkorta (Athletic Bilbao), Sergi Barjuan (Barcelona), Albert Ferrer (Chelsea), Michel Salgado (Celta Vigo), Fernando Hierro (Real Madrid), Vicente Engonga (Mallorca), Paco Jemez (Real Zaragoza)

Midfielders: Luis Enrique (Barcelona), Ito Alvarez (Real Betis), Bittor Alkiza (Athletic Bilbao), Francisco de Pedro (Real Sociedad)

Strikers: Joseba Etxeberria, Ismael Urzaiz (both Athletic Bilbao), Kiko (Atletico Madrid), Marcos Vales (Real Zaragoza), Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid)

Swedish coach Tommy Soderberg named his squad on Friday for the Oct. 14. Euro 2000 qualifier against Bulgaria in Burgas. Two players will be added this week.

Goalkeepers: Magnus Hedman (Coventry), Magnus Kihlstedt (Lillestrom)

Defenders: Patrik Andersson (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Joachim Bjorklund (Valencia), Pontus Kamark (Leicester), Teddy Lucic (Gothenburg), Johan Mjallby (AIK), Roland Nilsson (Coventry), Gary Sundgren (Real Zaragoza)

Midfielders/Strikers: Daniel Andersson (Bari), Jesper Blomqvist (Manchester United), Magnus Erlingmark (Gothenburg), Henrik Larsson (Celtic), Fredrik Ljungberg (Arsenal), Hakan Mild (Gothenburg), Jorgen Pettersson (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Stefan Schwarz (Valencia), Par Zetterberg (Anderlecht)

Denmark named its 19-man squad on for its European championship group one qualifiers against Wales in Copenhagen on Oct. 10 and Switzerland in Zurich on Oct. 14:

Goalkeepers: Peter Kjaer (Silkeborg), Mogens Krogh (Brondby), Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United)

Defenders: Soeren Colding (Brondby), Jan Heintze (Bayer Leverkusen), Rene Henriksen (AB Copenhagen), Jes Hoegh (Fenerbahce), Marc Rieper (Celtic), Ole Tobiasen (Ajax Amsterdam)

Midfielders: Per Frandsen (Bolton), Thomas Graversen (Hamburg), Thomas Helveg (AC Milan), Martin Joergensen (Udinese), Allan Nielsen (Tottenham), Claus Thomsen (Wolfsburg)

Forwards: Soeren Frederiksen (AaB Aalborg), Ebbe Sand (Brondby), Jon Dahl Tomasson (Feyenoord), Mikkel Beck (Middlesbrough)

The Czech Republic, runner-up in the 1996 European championship finals, announced its players for this month's Euro 2000 group nine qualifiers against Bosnia and Estonia.

They face Bosnia in Sarajevo on Oct. 10 and Estonia in Teplice on Oct. 14.

Lazio's Pavel Nedved will miss the Bosnia game after being sent off in last month's qualifier against the Faroe Islands, which the Czechs won 1-0. But he will be available for the home tie against Estonia.

Squad:
Goalkeepers: Ladislav Maier (Rapid Vienna), Tomas Postulka (Sparta Prague)

Defenders: Martin Kotulek (Olomouc), Karel Rada (Trabzonspor), Tomas Repka (Fiorentina), Jan Suchoparek (Strasbourg), Tomas Votava (Sparta Prague)

Midfielders: Radek Bejbl (Atletico Madrid), Patrik Berger (Liverpool), Martin Cizek (Sparta Prague), Tomas Galasek (Tilburg), Radoslav Latal, Jiri Nemec (both Schalke), Pavel Nedved (Lazio), Karel Poborsky (Benfica), Radek Slonick (Ostrava)

Forwards: Pavel Kuka (Nuremberg), Vratislav Lokvenc (Sparta Prague), Vladimir Smicer (RC Lens)

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Soccer Weekly

MILLWALL FANS DISGRACE

The Football Association (FA) said Wednesday they are waiting for a police report before launching an investigation into violent clashes at Millwall's match against Manchester City on Tuesday.

Hundreds of fans clashed with riot police during and after the 1-1 draw in the English division two match in what local police described as the worst football trouble they had witnessed for years.

Three police dog handlers came under attack and one suffered minor injuries.

Another officer was taken to hospital with a broken arm after a rock was thrown at him. Mobs of fans smashed car and shop windows. Eighteen fans were arrested.

City's players were kept inside the stadium for their own safety and their departure was delayed for an hour after the match while their 2,500 fans were also locked inside the ground.

Chief Inspector Chris Miles from Lewisham Police, who was in charge of operations at the ground, said: "The violence was absolutely horrifying, the worst I have seen for a long time."

"We kept the City fans back in the ground for their own protection. I would say there were up to 300 fans involved -- almost all Millwall supporters. And there were injuries to both police and fans."

There were several pitch invasions during the game, and City manager Joe Royle claims his players were spat at and threatened.

City boss Joe Royle said: "I cannot believe what I saw. It was a disgrace. If we had scored another goal in that atmosphere, I don't think we would have got out alive."

"They must have changed the rules down in London. I didn't think fans were allowed on to the pitch to threaten my players."

A spokesman for the FA said: "We are awaiting the police report before deciding what to do. There is nothing further at the moment."

Dutch international striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink retracted his threat to quit Leeds United should manager George Graham move to Tottenham Hotspur as expected.

"If the next man comes in and wants to build a team to win things I will sign a six-year contract tomorrow," Hasselbaink said on the team's telephone club call.

"It all depends on what is going to happen. It is the same for everybody."

The 25-year-old Dutchman, who joined Leeds from Portuguese side Boavista for 2.0 million pounds (\$3.4 million) 15 months ago, said only two days earlier Graham's rumoured departure would make it very difficult for him.

"I would have no choice but to think about my future," Hasselbaink said then ahead of the team's UEFA Cup second leg match against Maritimo in Madeira.

Leeds won the tie on a penalty shootout in a match likely to have been their last with Graham in charge with press reports confidently predicting he will have signed as Tottenham manager by the weekend.

Aston Villa will be without two key midfielders in their next UEFA Cup match.

Alan Thompson and Ian Taylor are automatically ruled out of the first leg of the second round after picking up their second yellow cards of the competition in Wednesday's 3-0 triumph in Norway.

One of the options would have been to drop new signing Paul Merson back from attack but he is ineligible until the quarter-finals, leaving Villa with a midfield headache.

Skipper Gareth Southgate admitted: "We have lost a big chunk of our midfield especially with Paul unable to play as well."

"It now depends on who we get in the draw, whether we are home or away in the first leg, as to what we can do to try to overcome their absence."

"But we have players who can come in -- and in any case to my mind the Premiership is the priority anyway and if we can stay in the UEFA Cup it will be a bonus."

Crystal Palace completed the signing of former Swedish international Mathias Svensson from Austrian side FC Tirol for an undisclosed fee.

Svensson was at Portsmouth under Venables, making 51 appearances and scoring seven goals.

English Premier League club Everton said on Tuesday that red tape was holding up the signing of Montpellier's Ivory Coast striker Ibrahim Bakayoko.

Everton spokesman Alan Myers said a deal had been agreed in principle with the club and the player.

"Now it's just a case of waiting for the work permit to arrive. There is no point taking it any further until then."

The French sports daily L'Equipe reported that 21-year-old Bakayoko was in Liverpool on Monday for a medical and was expected to sign a five-year contract for around \$7.5 million.

George Graham intends to recreate the stylish football played under the legendary Bill Nicholson in the 1950s and 1960s.

Graham said: "I know what Spurs mean to the people. I am not in the business of tearing down monuments to past glories. I haven't done it at Leeds. Nobody respects the legacy of Don Revie and his magnificent football teams more than me."

"Equally, I am a long-time admirer of the fantastic football produced under Bill Nicholson, whom I know well. I am honoured even to be considered as a successor. Let the fans be assured I know where they come

from and what they long for."

Even before Graham left on Monday for Leeds' UEFA Cup-tie against Maritimo in Madeira on Tuesday, he had already vacated his flat in Harrogate and booked himself an onward flight to London from Leeds-Bradford Airport following their return yesterday.

Leeds are believed to have made the first tentative approaches to Coventry last week for the possible release of their manager Gordon Strachan.

George Graham returns to North London today pronouncing himself ready, eager and able to bring back the Hallelujah days to White Hart Lane. Assuming he finds Spurs chairman Alan Sugar to be fired with that same ambition, he will jump at the chance of restoring Tottenham's faded glory.

And he gives this assurance to any doubting fans: "I know and respect the traditions of this great club. If we agree to meet this challenge together I will make it my business to give Tottenham the success and the football they deserve."

Graham went into those discussions without seeking advice from friend Terry Venables about Sugar's tyrannical reputation or the anatomy of the bitter legal feud which ended with the former England coach being forced out of Tottenham.

"I have deliberately not consulted Terry about the chairman," Graham revealed last night. "I want to keep an open mind and make my own judgments."

"Of course, I know all about the problems they had. I understand that Alan Sugar can be hard-nosed and very much to the point."

"But I can be blunt myself when necessary. I prefer to thrash things out head to head than to be sweet-talked by someone who is saying different things behind my back."

"I'm also a different person to Terry. We are very close and he taught me so much about coaching and management at the start. But while he has always been fascinated by the business side of the game, my preoccupation is with the team."

"All that matters to me is that the wires of authority don't get crossed."

Besides, I suspect this may be the time to work with this particular chairman. A lot of directors start off with the wrong idea about the game. Some of them come into it for the ego trip, perhaps for the money."

But as they go along they not only learn more about how the game works but find themselves catching the football bug."

"They become fans. They begin to let their hearts rule their heads a little. They work out the complex relationships between the players, the manager and the board."

"Besides, anyone who hires me knows that I will not tolerate interference with the football. At every club I manage, I do it my way."

George Graham

Factfile on George Graham

Born: Nov. 30, 1944; Coatbridge, Scotland

Playing record and honours

1961-63 Aston Villa
1963-66 Chelsea
1966-72 Arsenal
1972-74 Man United
1974-76 Portsmouth
1976-77 Crystal Palace

Total league appearances: 455; Goals: 105

Honours: Chelsea (League Cup winners 1965), Arsenal (Fairs Cup winners 1970, League Championship 1971, F.A. Cup winners 1971)

Scotland: 12 caps; 1971-73; 3 goals.

Managerial record
1982-86 Millwall
1986-95 Arsenal
1996- Leeds United

Main Honours: Arsenal (Champions 1989, 1991; F.A. Cup Winners 1993, League Cup Winners 1987,

1993, European Cup Winners' Cup Winners 1994)

December 1994: Allegations that Graham received an illegal payment of as part of the deal that brought John Jensen to Highbury in 1993.

February 1995: Arsenal chairman Peter Hill-Wood dismisses Graham in the light of the "bung" allegations.

July 1995: The F.A. charge Graham with misconduct and ban him for a year.

September 1996: Becomes Leeds United manager, two months after his ban expires.

September 5, 1998: Tottenham Hotspur sack Christian Gross. Chairman Alan Sugar targets Graham as his new manager.

September 30: Leeds give Graham permission to talk to Tottenham.

BLADES BATTLE BENFICA

Sheffield United on Wednesday stepped up their efforts to force cash-strapped Benfica to pay the transfer fee for striker Brian Deane.

In a statement Mike McDonald, chairman of first division United, said Benfica had paid only one installment on the one million pounds (\$1.7 million) fee they agreed in January.

McDonald said he had received a personal guarantee from Benfica's club president Joao Vale e Azevedo covering the debt in the event of any non-payment.

"SUFC (Sheffield United Football Club) now intends to enforce this personal guarantee in Lisbon," McDonald said.

Last week McDonald called on soccer's world body FIFA to expel Benfica from the Champions' League because of their failure to pay.

Earlier this summer FIFA intervened in an attempt to force Benfica to pay English premier league club Manchester United a 3.3 million pounds fee they had agreed for Czech forward Karel Poborsky. Media reports say Benfica still owes United 1.8 million pounds.

In May a Portuguese court froze the club's bank accounts after it failed to maintain payments on a \$2.2 million loan from a local bank.

Benfica said it was paying its players from private accounts while its official club accounts were frozen to avoid a mass exodus of talent from the club.

QUINN BACK FOR IRISH

Veteran striker Niall Quinn was recalled to the Republic of Ireland squad on Wednesday for next month's European Championship qualifying games after recovering from injury.

The Sunderland star, who has 63 caps, is included in the 20-man list to play Yugoslavia in Belgrade on Oct. 10 and Malta at Lansdowne Road four days later.

He last played in the friendly against Argentina in April before a nagging back injury forced him onto the sidelines.

Republic of Ireland squad to play Yugoslavia and Malta:

Shay Given (Newcastle United), Dean Kiely (Bury), Denis Irwin (Man Utd), Jeff Kenna (Blackburn), Steve Staunton (Liverpool), Ian Harte (Leeds), Ken Cunningham (Wimbledon), Phil Babb (Liverpool), Gary Breen (Coventry), Roy Keane (Man Utd), Mark Kinsella (Charlton), Alan McLoughlin (Portsmouth), Lee Carsley (Derby), Jason McAteer (Liverpool), Mark Kennedy (Wimbledon), Tony Cascarino (Nancy), Niall Quinn (Sunderland), Damien Duff (Blackburn), Robbie Keane (Wolves), Rory Delap (Derby).



Efan Ekoku (left) flies high for Wimbledon against Leicester.

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Daryl Katz

MUNICH JINX STRIKES AGAIN

Manchester United's misery at conceding a last minute Champions Cup equaliser was compounded when it was forced to spend an extra night in Germany.

United could not fly home after the Champions' League match because its in-coming charter flight had been delayed beyond midnight and aircraft are not allowed to use Munich airport after that time because of noise.

United were due to return to Manchester on Thursday morning and the delay will have added to the frustration of manager Alex Ferguson and his players.

The team was just seconds away from a priceless victory which would have left it joint top of Group D on four points with Barcelona until a Peter Schmeichel blunder gifted Bayern Munich a last-gasp leveller.

Schmeichel came and completely missed Bixente Lizarazu's throw-in and the ball appeared to come off Teddy Sheringham and into the net, although Brazilian Giovane Elber claimed the final touch.

United winger Jesper Blomqvist was gutted, but he refused to blame Schmeichel.

"It was terrible in the end because we had it and then we lost it," he said.

"I really felt we were going to get what would have been a great result, but we couldn't do it.

"We seemed to get tired in the final 15 minutes and we couldn't keep the ball and Bayern made us pay.

"That's part of playing in Europe and if you make one mistake, then the other team will take advantage and Bayern did.

"But I don't think you can blame Peter because he had a great game."

Ferguson felt the group was now entering its decisive phase — with United due to play Brondby twice, while Bayern and Barcelona meet each other.

"We have come to the part that I think will be crucial," he said.

"We now have to play Brondby and if we don't do well in those two games then we don't deserve to go through, while we will be hoping Bayern and Barcelona take points of each other."

Elber had given Bayern the lead after 11 minutes with a goal which looked blatantly offside before David Beckham crossed for Dwight Yorke to head United level on 29 minutes.

Beckham then stupidly picked up his second yellow card in the Champions' League for a foul on Stefan Effenberg and he will miss the game against Brondby in Denmark in two weeks time.

Paul Scholes shot United in front three minutes after

half-time, although he seemed to control the ball with his arm, before Bayern staged a grand finale.

Bayern president Franz Beckenbauer felt his team's chances of qualifying for the last eight had gone after the draw left them with just one point.

"Manchester United impressed me greatly except for the last 20 minutes when Bayern played with the style they usually show," he said.

"But despite that it was not enough to beat Manchester United.

"I think we can be happy with the draw from this match, but the one point is not enough for us.

"We're going to have to win our last four games, which is asking too much I think."

Hearts' Neil McCann is set to make his first international start for Scotland in the European Championships qualifier against Estonia this week on at his club ground Tynecastle.

McCann has moved into contention as a rash of injuries have once again left manager Craig Brown with a shortage of attacking options.

McCann, who made his debut as a late substitute in the goal-less draw against Lithuania in Scotland's uninspiring start to the campaign last month, may line-up from the outset because of an injury to Kevin Gallacher.

The Blackburn forward will be named in the squad, but is suffering from a persistent calf strain and after missing the UEFA Cup exit in Lyon is considered doubtful for Saturday's English Premiership clash with West Ham.

He said: "It is frustrating because I have not had an injury like this before and not playing means I am now badly short of the necessary match practice."

Brown will keep faith with veteran Ally McCoist who earned a dramatic recall after a hat-trick for Kilmarnock against Hearts having been omitted from the original squad for Lithuania.

But there seems no prospect of Gordon Durie returning to the fold despite his swift rate of recovery following ankle ligament damage incurred playing for Rangers against PAOK Salonika in August.

Brown had hinted at starting with McCann in a more central role to that he adopts for his club side against Lithuania, but McCoist's late goalscoring burst convinced him otherwise.

A lack of goals was Scotland's main flaw at France 98 with first choice pairing Gallacher and Durie both failing to score.

NEWS

A Swedish court gave an English fan to a two-month sentence on Thursday for rioting after a match between Sweden and England last month, judicial officials said.

The 22-year-old man whose identity was not given was arrested on Sept. 5. He was barred from re-entering Sweden for five years after serving his prison term.

Judge Hans Frostell said the court took into account that he had been held for 25 days before the court ruling.

According to the accusation, the man threw a supermarket trolley complete with beer bottles as well as a beer barrel through a window of Raasunda Stadium where the match was played.

He was also found guilty of taking part in a fight with Swedish police after the match was over.

Arsenal are likely to escape heavy punishment from UEFA over the late kick-off of Wednesday's Champions' League match at Wembley, a UEFA spokesman said Thursday.

The start of the Group E clash with Greek side Panathinaikos at Wembley — which the English champions won 2-1 — was delayed by 25 minutes due to traffic and public transport problems.

Just 32,000 people out of a capacity 73,455 crowd were in the ground less than a quarter of an hour before kick off and the match was put back even though the players and officials were already in the tunnel.

A UEFA spokeswoman said: "In such cases the club normally would be fined but in this case it seems there are some special circumstances why the kick-off was late."

"The problem will be discussed on Oct. 8, and if Arsenal were fined, it would be a smaller amount than usual."

UEFA however are also understood to be angry that Arsenal's pre-match press conference on Tuesday was delayed by 90 minutes.

English First Division Huddersfield is negotiating with Swedish defender Jesper Mattsson as they bid to boost their promotion-chasing side.

Mattsson, who plays for 1997 Swedish champions Halmstad, is due to fly to England on Monday for talks with Huddersfield manager Peter Jackson, Swedish media reported on Thursday.

Mattsson has a three-year contract with Halmstad but has a clause stating he can be released for around 400,000 dollars if he reaches accord with an overseas team.

English Premier League club Blackburn Rovers were Thursday dealt another injury blow with the news that Sebastien Perez will be out of action for two months.

The French midfielder, a three million pound summer signing from Bastia, aggravated a long-standing knee problem after scoring as Rovers bowed out of the UEFA Cup in Lyon on Tuesday night.

Perez stayed in France to see a specialist while the Blackburn players returned to England. It has now been confirmed he has cartilage damage.

"Sebastien will stay in France for the operation," said Blackburn manager Roy Hodgson.

Blackburn are, meanwhile, hopeful that Kevin Gallacher and Martin Dahlin, both struggling with calf injuries, could be back for the visit of West Ham on Saturday.

Leeds United said on Thursday it had received approval to expand its Elland Road stadium by 5,000 seats.

The Leeds plan includes plans to build an indoor arena, add 5,000 seats and 32 new executive boxes in a redeveloped West Stand and to build a 200 bedroom hotel and 160,000 square feet of leisure development.

Elland Road currently has a capacity of 40,000.

UEFA CUP SEEDING

UEFAs seeding system will ensure that there will be no 'Battle of Britain' clashes resulting from Friday's UEFA Cup second round draw.

English Premiership leaders Aston Villa and Scottish champions Celtic have been seeded in Group C while Leeds and Rangers — if they overcome Beitar Jerusalem at Ibrox later on Thursday — are unseeded in Group D.

The four seeded teams from each of the four groups of eight will be drawn against the four unseeded sides in their groups.

That means Liverpool — seeded in Group A — will face one of Red Star Belgrade of

Yugoslavia, Polish club Wisla Krakow or Spanish teams Valencia and Real Sociedad.

Celtic manager Jozef Venglos may have avoided a meeting with his former club Aston Villa, but either British side could face French club Marseille.

Seeded teams by groups are:

Group A: Parma, Liverpool, Lyon, Dynamo Moscow

Group B: Monaco, FC Brugge, Grasshopper, Real Betis

Group C: Slavia Prague, Aston Villa, Celtic, Werder Bremen

Group D: Bordeaux, Bayer Leverkusen, Atletico Madrid, Roma



Premier League action ... Mark Hughes (right) of Southampton against West Ham's Berkowitz.

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Soccer Weekly

UK PRESS GIVE SCHMEICHEL A GOOD KICKING

Manchester United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, castigated for a disastrous error in a vital match on Wednesday, will be out of action for two weeks because of a stomach muscle injury.

United manager Alex Ferguson said Schmeichel, whose mistake let Bayern Munich equalise in the Champions' League match in Munich on Wednesday, has had the injury for two weeks and aggravated it on Wednesday.

He will miss Saturday's premier league clash at Southampton as well as Denmark's European championship qualifying matches against Wales a week later and Switzerland four days after that.



Paul Scholes, whose goal on Wednesday gave United a 2-1 lead in Munich, will also miss the Southampton match with a foot injury.

Schmeichel and Scholes join Ryan Giggs and Ronny Johnson on a lengthening United injury list.

Some British newspapers were scathing about Schmeichel's goalkeeping gaffe which cost Manchester United victory in Munich, but most were in forgiving mood towards the giant Dane.

Schmeichel charged out to try and catch a throw-in in injury time but missed the ball completely while knocking his defenders out of the way, leaving his goal open for Giovane Elber to force in the equaliser for a 2-2 draw.

The tabloid Daily Express was most critical of what it called Schmeichel's "staggering error."

"Deep in the mind of Peter Schmeichel, something snapped. Why he made the calamitous attempt to collect the throw-in from Bayern's Bixente Lizarazu through a crowd of players only he knows. But the moment he did, United were in trouble," the Express said.

"This was the sort of trouble which ends dreams, which costs championships, which United know only too well in Europe. This was the sort of trouble which might just be the difference between playing a Champions Cup quarterfinal in March and watching one on TV."

The Sun called Schmeichel's mistake "a schoolboy blunder" but along with other papers including the Mirror devoted more space to words of forgiveness from Ferguson and his other players.

The Independent summed up the general reaction that after his sterling earlier work, Schmeichel ought not to be censured for his mistake, costly though it was.

Their report began: "It is the loneliest position in the world - and last night Peter Schmeichel knew it."

"I can confirm that we have come to an arrangement with Tottenham Hotspur whereby they have agreed to pay compensation in line with the contract that George Graham signed last December," Ridsdale said.

The move showed that the passionate feelings of fans, handed down from generation to generation, count little in the English game in the 1990s where survival in the premier league is paramount to a club's financial future.

Arsenal and Tottenham supporters have little time for each other. Last year Arsenal fans talked of winning the treble -- the league championship, F.A. Cup and watching Spurs get relegated.

They achieved two of the targets while Tottenham were happy to stay up.

Some Tottenham fans, who have a reputation for enjoying attractive football and flamboyant players, have already been angered by the talk of the arrival of Graham, who has a reputation for careful rather than champagne soccer.

The Scot is known for getting teams to defend well and threw out the "name" players when he first arrived at Leeds.

But share levels are more important than shared devils in today's game.

The reality is that Tottenham, one of the most glamorous

clubs in the English game, are struggling to match their glory days of 1950s and 1960s. Apart from one F.A. Cup success in 1991, they have won very little in the last decade.

Faced with becoming one of the second-class clubs in the premier league without the income or glory to match the likes of Manchester United and Arsenal, they needed a manager who could ensure survival in the league and then bid for a lucrative place in Europe.

Scot Graham, one of the most highly-paid managers in the country, fitted the bill.

Graham was a member of the 1971 Arsenal double team and coached the club to the league championship in 1989 and 1991. Under Graham, Arsenal also won the F.A. Cup in 1993 and the European Cup Winners' Cup in the following year.

But his term at Highbury came to an acrimonious end when he was dismissed in February 1995 after allegations that he had received an illegal payment as part of deal that brought Dane John Jensen to Arsenal.

The F.A. charged Graham with misconduct and banned him from soccer for a year.

Two months after his ban expired in July, 1996, Graham was appointed Leeds manager in succession to the sacked Howard Wilkinson.

He immediately transformed the club, who finished in the top five in the premier league last season and gained entry into Europe.

Leeds were starting their hunt for a new boss on Thursday. Coventry City's Gordon Strachan was regarded as being a possible target. Leicester City's Martin O'Neill was another candidate.

Leicester chairman John Elsom warned Leeds United on Thursday that he will not listen to offers for their highly-rated manager Martin O'Neill.

O'Neill is one of the favourites to replace new Tottenham manager George Graham at the Yorkshire club but Elsom insisted that he will make the Irishman honour his contract, which has two years to run.



Peter Schmeichel

O'Neill has admitted to having problems with the management at Leicester, but Elsom said he rated him higher than any other manager in Britain.

Elsom said: "Martin O'Neill is under contract at Leicester City Football Club until the summer of the year 2000."

"If Leeds were to wish to speak to Martin they would need to gain the permission of the board and myself. This permission will not be given."

"It is my opinion that Martin is the best manager in the Premier League," added Elsom.

"It therefore follows that I am not surprised his name comes up broadly every time there is a leading managerial vacancy."

"There is a spirit within the playing camp at this club which is second to none and clearly emanates from the motivational skills of Martin."

"We have experienced two of the most successful years in the club's history under Martin's leadership."

O'Neill himself said: "All I can say at this stage is that it is all pure speculation and the whole thing is hypothetical."

"The coincidence is that we face Leeds on Saturday and I think I would have preferred it if George Graham was still their manager and that speculation about him going was still driving on."

ELLAND ROAD EL TEL?

Scottish Premier division side Hearts have snapped up former French international midfielder Vincent Guerin on a short-term deal.

Guerin, 32, was banned for 18 months with 12 months suspended in January after testing positive for the banned steroid nandrolone last September.

His ban was subsequently lifted by a civil court on the grounds that he had taken the drug unknowingly. That decision infuriated the French Football Federation (FFF), who have launched their own appeal against the judgement.

Guerin's controversial past has failed to dissuade Hearts manager Jim Jefferies securing his services until the end of this season with the option for another year.

Out of contract at Paris St Germain, he was also considering offers from Major Soccer League and J-League teams.

Guerin, who has been capped 19 times, trained at Tynecastle earlier this week before the club set off for their European Cup Winners' Cup tie against Real Mallorca.

He is set to make his debut on Sunday against St Johnstone.

England striker Teddy Sheringham insisted Friday that he wants to stay at Manchester United and will battle to regain his place in the English Premier League side's starting line-up.

The former Tottenham star made only his second start of the season against Bayern Munich on Wednesday and his chances have been limited by the intense competition for places in Alex Ferguson's side.

First division Crystal Palace wanted to reunite him with his former England and Tottenham manager Terry Venables at Selhurst Park, but Sheringham said he does not want to leave United.

Sheringham believes he is still good enough to play for United and he is prepared to fight for his place.

"There is no chance of me leaving easily," he said. "I don't want to go anywhere and I made that quite clear at the start of the season."

"Even if Terry or another manager came in for me, I would tell them that I'm not interested in leaving. I still think I'm good enough to play for United," he told the Manchester Evening News.

After just three months at Crystal Palace's helm, former England boss Terry Venables emerged Friday as a possible candidate for the position of coach of Leeds United.

English newspapers reported that Venables had joined the short list of candidates for the Leeds job which opened when George Graham left to manage Tottenham Hotspur.

The Independent newspaper said Venables was becoming increasingly frustrated at the

limited resources available for big-name signings at first division Crystal Palace.

Leicester City's Martin O'Neill and Coventry's Gordon Strachan have also been tipped for the Leeds position but their club chairmen have said they will not give permission for any approaches to be made to the two young managers.

Paul Alcock, the referee decked by Sheffield Wednesday's Paolo Di Canio, enjoyed a routine afternoon on Saturday when he presided over his first English Premier League



match since the infamous Hillsborough incident.

Alcock refereed Everton's 2-1 win over Wimbledon at Selhurst Park and the match passed off without major incident.

Alcock was reported to have considered retiring as a referee after Di Canio, who had just been sent off, pushed him to the ground during last Saturday's clash between Wednesday and champions Arsenal.

Forward Paul Scholes and central defender Rio Ferdinand are doubtful for England's European championship qualifier against Bulgaria at Wembley on Oct. 10.

Manchester United's Scholes missed the 3-0 victory a Southampton on Saturday with a foot injury picked up in last Wednesday's Champions' League draw against Bayern Munich in Germany.

Ferdinand was substituted after injuring his ankle during West Ham's 3-0 premier league defeat at Blackburn Rovers on Saturday.

England coach Glenn Hoddle is already without suspended midfielders David Beckham and Paul Ince for the game against Bulgaria next Saturday. England plays a second group five qualifier in Luxembourg the following Wednesday.



UEFA Cup action: Lyon v Blackburn.

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